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Editor
D.P. Chattopadhyaya

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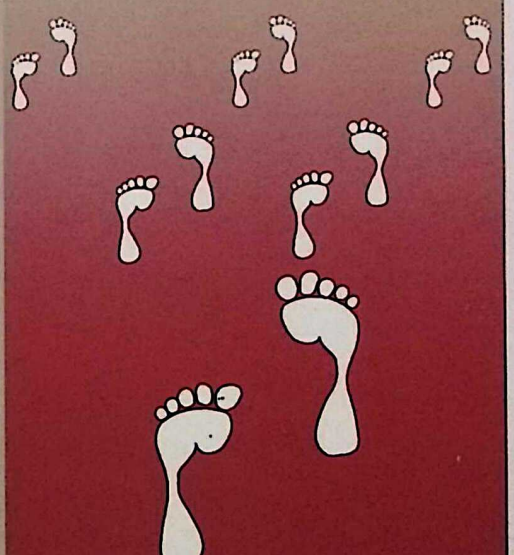

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From the Editorial Desk

Explorations in the cultural heritage and civilizational complexities of various regions of India have involved scholars at the PHISPC in their pursuit of unravelling and analyzing specific identities as well as a search for roots, traditions and mores. There has also been an engagement with minority religions who inspite of retaining their individualities have been an integral and indispensable part of the collective Indian conscience, society and culture. Their contribution has been enduring and significant.

This particular issue of *Sandhan* for the major part brings some representative contributions presented at PHISPC regional and subject specific Seminars which will in due course form a part of the relevant volumes.

The north-eastern coastal State of Orissa because of its variegated topography, any number of racial and ethnic groups, diversity in occupations is a very scintillating and rewarding location for anthropological studies. The Odras are referred to in the epics. They merged with the Utkals and other races to form present day Oriya people who ethnically and culturally represent a blend of Aryans and Dravidians as well as tribal people. Known by many names Utkala, Kalinga and Odra Desa it has infinite possibilities for research in castes, tribes and folk culture as also Buddhistic studies, for indeed Kalinga in the 3rd Century BC has been an abiding and defining moment in history. It is common to view Orissa as a religious destination because of the Jagannath Cult and as a Centre of Buddhism, but its fabulous monuments, sculptures, folk art and special dance form Odissi dance set it apart. One

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remarkable feature of Orissa is its cultural diversity because of Sanskritic traditions, the presence of aboriginal castes and tribes, who lend a certain colourful individuality to the region. So much for the anthropologists. But the rich natural resources bring the other side of Orissa, as an emerging industrial state with the commissioning of the Hirakud dam and the Paradip Seaport.

D.P CHATTOPADHYAYA
Editor

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Job Kozhamthadam

Christian Contribution to Science in India

Although the Christian presence in India right from the very beginning of the Christian era is well recognized by most scholars, Christian contribution to science in India is very much under-recognized. Except for the well-deserved encomiums conferred on Christian institutions of higher education and healthcare for establishing and running world-class science departments, research centres and hospitals in various parts of India, very little credit is given to the contribution of Christians to the development of science in India over the centuries. Hardly any substantial writing exists on this topic. This paper is a modest attempt to shed some light on this important phase of scientific development in India. History of science in India is often divided into four stages: Vedic, Pre-Mughal, Colonial, and Contemporary. We will focus on the latter two stages and science will be understood in its modern sense, the usual meaning given to it in the science departments of over 17,000 colleges and similar institutions in India.

While considering the contributions of Christianity to science in India, a few points need to be kept in mind:

1. In the initial stages, Western science came to India first and foremost through Christian missionaries, and hence its content and mode of transmission were very much conditioned by the scientific tradition they inherited and were brought up with, the religious faith they firmly adhered to, and the religious motivation that drove them on.

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2. Most of the scientists belonged to the Society of Jesus, popularly known as the Jesuits, widely recognized as the "scientific order of the Catholic Church."
3. Most of these scholars were not professional scientists, as we understand the term today, particularly till the end of the 19th century. They were first and foremost devoted missionaries and their engagement in science was in some ways looked upon as a means to further this religious priority. Of course, this approach changed in course of time particularly from the 20th century onwards. Today outstanding departments of science, research centres and medical centres are run by Christians in various parts of India on a highly professional basis.
4. The contribution they made was significant and was indeed a shot in the arm of the stagnant and underdeveloped science existing in the land at the time. As we shall see, some of the findings of these stalwarts were of international quality and were recognized as such by international authorities in the field. However, some of the theories they subscribed to were sadly outmoded and the areas of investigation they engaged in were severely limited. This was particularly true of heliocentric view of Copernicus which for all practical purposes was prevented from entering into India for a long time until the time of the British rule.
5. As a result of all these complex factors, science in India lacked dynamism and creativity. In the beginning the focus was very much confined to positional astronomy, geographical surveys, cartography and similar practical science. To use the Kuhnian terminology, Indian science confined itself mostly to "normal science." As mentioned earlier, this has changed from the 20th century onwards, and today many Christian institutions of science are among the best in India and some of them are of international standard.

We will divide the Christian contribution to science in India into two main sections: The first part from the 17th to the 19th centuries and the second part from the end of the 19th century to the present.

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Early Christian Contribution to Science in India (17–19 Centuries)

Christianity and the Origin of Modern Science

That the Christian missionaries were the first to transmit modern Western science to India was no accident; nor was science something they picked up just to get an entry into the intellectual world of India. There was a close link between Christianity and modern science. In fact, it can be said that modern science was Christianity's gift to the world. Alfred North Whitehead, for instance, has traced the roots of modern science to Christianity when he argued that science originated "from the medieval insistence on the rationality of God, conceived as with the personal energy of Jehovah and with the rationality of a Greek philosopher." In more recent times Paul Davies also has argued along similar lines. He believes that "science emerged from medieval Europe, under the twin influences of Greek philosophy and the Judeo-Christian thought." The Greeks bequeathed the tradition of systematic reasoning, whereas the Judeo-Christian religion came up with the concept of a transcendental God who created the orderly universe in time by imposing on it certain immutable laws. According to J.L. Heilbron, "science prospered in early modern times, it derived important support and reinforcement from organized religion."

Obviously, many scholars may contest this claim. However, the fact that practically all the original founders of modern science were devout and practicing Christians, many of whom openly confessed to have found absolutely no tension between their religion and their science, adds considerable support to this claim. For instance, Kepler believed that astronomers were priests of the Almighty, the only difference between them and ordinary priests being that they were ministers of the Book of Nature (the deed of God), whereas the latter were ministers of the Book of Scripture (the word of God). He wrote to the Bavarian chancellor Hans Georg Herwart von Hohenburg, his patron and friend: "Indeed I am of the opinion that since astronomers are priests of Almighty God with respect to the book of Nature, we should concern ourselves not with the praise of

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our cleverness but with the glory of God." In Sir Isaac Newton also we can see the same sentiment. In his letter to Richard Bentley, Bishop of Worcester, explaining his motivation for writing *The Principia*, he declared: "When I wrote my treatise about our system, I had an eye upon such principles as might work with considering men for the belief of a Deity; and nothing can rejoice me more than to find it useful for that purpose." Newton makes it very clear that his scientific program was aimed at strengthening the religious commitment of educated persons.

Similar sentiments can be found in the words and works of other founders of modern science like Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes, Leibniz, etc. Galileo remained a devout Catholic till the last moment of his life. In his trial of 1633 a list of accusations was brought against him. Two of them he found most painful: 1. He indulged in deceitful tactics (i.e., questioning his moral character). 2. His fidelity to the Church was suspect (i.e., questioning his religious loyalty). He pleaded for the expunction of these two accusations, and his request was promptly granted. It seems to me that this historical fact is a powerful argument for the claim that Galileo did not find any incompatibility between his science and his Christian life. This point is the basic theme of one of the most recent books on Galileo, *Galileo for Copernicanism and for the Church* by Annibale Fantoli.

The close relationship between modern science and Christianity was not confined to a handful of individual scientists only. The same constructive spirit pervaded to a great extent at the institutional level as well. All through the centuries many clerics showed a genuine appreciation for science and the scientific attitude. It may be noted that even in the Middle Ages the monasteries in various parts of Europe became custodians of the scientific heritage, including the Greek science, especially of precious ancient manuscripts and related items. During the Middle Ages the works of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, and of Roger Bacon, a Franciscan who taught optics and experimental science at Paris and Oxford, have been well recognized by scholars. The churchmen also played an important role in translating some of the important manuscripts of ancient science. After all, Copernicus himself was a

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canon of Frauenburg and was very closely associated with the official Church.

Furthermore, considerable evidence exists to show that the constructive association of the clergymen with science was not just one of passive appreciation only but also of active participation. True, hardly any one of them ever measured up to the stature of a Descartes, Kepler, or Newton, but they made a substantial contribution to the origin and development of science, especially when it was in its infancy. The impressive statistics presented by several recent scholars speak for themselves, both with regard to the sheer number of scientists involved and the diversity of areas covered. Poggendorf in his *Dictionnaire de Sciences Exactes* from antiquity to 1863 lists 8847 scientists. Of these 10% were Christian priests and members of religious orders.

The Jesuits

S.M. Razaullah Ansari points out that "the Jesuits were the first Europeans to introduce modern Western astronomy into the South and South-East Asia." This too was no mere accident. It is quite well known that the Jesuit Order was a major player in the origin and development of modern science in its infancy. Not only did several members of the Order make important contributions to science, especially in electricity and optics, but also its educational institutions produced many outstanding scientists. According to William B. Ashworth, "there is one Order that stands out from all others as the scientific Order without rival in seventeenth-century Catholicism, and that of course is the Society of Jesus." Well-known historian of science George Sarton writes: "One cannot talk about mathematics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries without seeing a Jesuit at every corner." According to Heilbron, the Jesuit order was the "single most important contributor to experimental physics in the seventeenth century." To mention a few Jesuit contributors to science, there was Christopher Clavius (1538–1612) who was acclaimed as the "Euclid of the Sixteenth Century," who, according to Sarton, was the "most influential teacher of the Renaissance."

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There was Jean Ciermans (1602–1648), who is reported to have anticipated Blaise Pascal in inventing the first calculator, a machine that can add and subtract without committing any error. Honore Fabri (1607–1688) is claimed to have discovered the circulation of the blood prior to Harvey, although he published it late. Christopher Scheiner (1575–1650) is well-known for his discovery of the sunspots and the function of the retina. Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) not only added his mite to the development of science but also played a pivotal role in disseminating scientific ideas in China. Nicolas Zucchi (1586–1670) invented the first reflecting telescope. The polymath Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680), known as a "universal genius" and a "master of a hundred arts," contributed extensively to diverse branches of science. Francesco Grimaldi (1613–1663) and Ignace Pardies (1636–1673) are celebrated for their views on the wave nature of light, since they dared to take on Newton on his particle theory of light. Francesco Lana-Terzi (1631–1687) is often called the "Father of Aviation." Girolamo Saccheri (1667–1733) is credited with having prepared the way for non-Euclidean geometry, an essential prerequisite for the later development of Einstein's theory of relativity. The outstanding scientific ideas of Roger Joseph Boscovich (1711–1787) in the eighteenth century cannot be overlooked. Carolus Sommervogel's twelve-volume work, *Bibliotheque de la Compagnie de Jesus,* gives the names and works of 631 Jesuits for the first two centuries of Jesuit history.

The Jesuits were also voluminous writers in the area of science. According to Dhruv Raina, "between the years 1600 and 1773, ... Jesuit scientists had authored more than 4,000 published works, about 600 journal articles appeared after 1700, and about 1000 manuscripts were available. The Society's known publications include 6,000 scientific works covering areas such as Aristotelian natural philosophy, medicine, philosophy, astronomy, and mathematics."

The *Collegio Romano,* unanimously considered as the flagship of Jesuit education, could count among its faculty members several outstanding scientists. The educational institutions of the Jesuits were noted for encouraging critical and progressive thinking, and produced many outstanding geniuses. Galileo (1564–1642),

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Descartes (1596–1650), and Mersenne were educated by the Jesuits. Kepler and other great scientists had rather extensive correspondence with Jesuit scholars.

The Jesuits participated not only in the creation and development of scientific ideas but also in their dissemination to other countries and peoples. For instance, they were the first to confirm Galileo's telescopic discoveries. Galileo published them in his *Starry Messenger* in 1610. Within five years the Jesuit missionaries in Peking gave an account of these historic discoveries.

It must also be mentioned, however, that this active participation and enthusiastic support extended by the institutional Catholic Church to the origin and development of modern science gradually began to wane. This turn of events had serious consequences for the future of science-Catholicism relationship and consequently for the Jesuit contribution to the development of modern science in India. Most importantly this kept India in the dark about the Copernican Revolution that had been sweeping Europe for a long time.

The Jesuits and the Copernican Revolution

The Jesuit response to the new view of Copernicus was very complex, and no facile categorization of the matter can capture the many aspects adequately. As a group the Jesuits were among the best educated in Europe. With their grounding not only in the prevalent philosophy but also in mathematics and astronomy, many of them were able to understand the theory and reflect on some of its implications. Particularly, some of the leading scientists in the group were also able to look at it critically, and identify its serious flaws and shortcomings. Because they were thoroughly and firmly trained in the Aristotelian worldview, convincing them of the superiority of a problem-ridden, untested theory would not have been easy. On the other hand, being progressive in their thinking, they were not closed to new ideas. Given all these factors, their attitude defied any easy categorization. Cautious openness perhaps best describes the attitude of the Jesuits towards the new theory, particularly till the condemnation of Galileo.

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Perhaps the best way to gauge the Jesuit response is to study how the *Collegio Romano* reacted to Copernicanism, especially its leading scientists. Christopher Clavius, the most influential mathematician-astronomer in Rome, if not in the whole of Europe, at the time, would make an interesting case. He had a tremendous admiration for Copernicus, and in his highly popular *Spheram Ioannis de Sacro Bosco Commentarius* he referred to Copernicus as "the most excellent geometer who, in our time, has put astronomy on its feet again and who will, in recognition thereof, be celebrated and admired by all posterity as Ptolemy's equal." It may be noted that in his work on the Gregorian calendar, he used the *Prutenic Tables* based on Copernicus's work rather than the traditional *Alphonsine tables.* Yet in the 1570 edition of his *Sphere* he strongly criticized the new theory for "many absurdities."

It is said that on being told about Galileo's discovery of the satellites of Jupiter, Clavius laughed and said jokingly, "You must construct a telescope which would first make them and then show them." But he was no close-minded conservative. In 1610 when the astronomers of his *Collegio Romano* promptly confirmed Galileo's telescopic discoveries using their own telescope, he immediately congratulated Galileo for his original discovery and added: "In very truth you deserve great praise for being the first to make these observations." He took into account these new findings while publishing the new edition of his *Sphere* in 1611. Clavius had a very warm and respectful friendship with Galileo till his death in 1612. At the time of his death Clavius had admitted that the Ptolemaic system in *forma pura* was no longer tenable. Although many scholars point out that he was inclined towards Copernicanism towards the end of his illustrious career, he never became a true Copernican.

Robert Cardinal Bellarmine too did not take a closed and rigid attitude towards the new theory. When many a recalcitrant Aristotelian of the day rejected Galileo's discoveries outright and refused even to look through the telescope, Bellarmine most willingly observed the sky through Galileo's latest telescope, and in his great excitement wrote to Clavius in 1611: "I myself have seen some very wonderful things concerning the moon and Venus." In

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his well-known letter to Paolo Antonio Foscarini Bellarmine clearly stated his willingness to concede that Copernicanism was the best hypothesis available.

Not only personally and privately, but in public too the Jesuits gave honour and recognition to Galileo and his discoveries. Soon after his publication of the *Sidereus Nuncius* they organized a grand public reception in his honour, in which high dignitaries like cardinals, princes, scientists, literary persons, and scholars of every description were invited. Naturally, Galileo was greatly pleased and elated by this gesture. He felt supported and reassured by the Jesuits, and so in time of trouble he felt confident to approach them, as was clear from his letter to his friend Cardinal Dini in 1615: "I believe that the quickest remedy [to the problems created by the opponents] would be to call upon the Jesuit Fathers, who are so much better educated than these Fathers (Lorini and others)."

Grienberger, the successor of Clavius in the *Collegio Romano* too kept an open mind towards the new theory, although not without certain reservations. A similar attitude was taken by many other scholars of the order as well.

However, this spirit of qualified openness began to wear out eventually with tragic consequences, as far as the Jesuit involvement and contribution to science were concerned. As Richard Blackwell remarks, from the time of the decree of 1616 onwards "the character of discourse about astronomy among the Jesuit scientists underwent a gradual but distinctive evolution toward rigidity." "With the notable exception of some isolated scientists of the first rank (e.g., Roger Boscovich and Girolamo Saccheri in the eighteenth century), Jesuit science was never to regain the promise it exhibited in the period from Clavius to Scheiner."

The reasons leading to this change of attitude also are complex involving many factors. Although often religious reasons are presented as the only culprit, the role and significance of other factors cannot be ignored. For instance, scientific reasons certainly were a major factor. Tycho Brahe had presented several scientific reasons against heliocentrism, the most important one being the absence of any observed stellar parallax. If the earth moved around

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the sun, we must be able to observe an apparent shift in the position of the stars. No such effect was found, not even by Tycho, the observational genius of the century. Grienberger, for instance, argued that "Galileo would do better to produce more convincing proofs for his theory before trying to adjust scripture to fit it." Bellarmine also stated that he was willing to reconsider his position provided demonstrative proofs could be given for the new view. It is true that the phases of Venus could prove that at least Venus revolved around the sun. But this could show only that the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic system was untenable. There remained the system of Tycho Brahe. The phases of Venus could not phase out Tycho's system.

Galileo was keenly aware of the need for presenting convincing proofs for his theory. He himself admitted it in his well-known letter to Duchess Christina, "To me, the surest and swiftest way to prove that the position of Copernicus is not contrary to scripture would be to give a host of proofs that it is true and that the contrary cannot be maintained at all." The same point he wrote in his notes on Bellarmine's Letter to Foscarini, paragraph 6: "It is the highest prudence to believe that there is no demonstration of the mobility of the earth until such a proof has been given. And we do not ask any one to believe this point without a demonstration.... If the proponents were to have no more than ninety percent of the arguments on their side, they would be rebutted." The need for demonstrative or irrefutable proofs Galileo was keenly aware of, but he could never come up with them. His master proof of the tides turned out to be a non-starter. The Jesuit scientists were well aware of the weak and shaky ground Galileo was treading on.

The absence of irrefutable proof alone was no justification to take a closed and rigid attitude towards the new theory. There were other reasons as well. The points above took on crucial importance because Galileo with his Copernican theory was demanding a non-literal interpretation of the Bible. Since many passages in the Bible affirmed geocentrism, whereas the new theory endorsed heliocentrism, it demanded a non-literal interpretation of the Bible. According to the traditional criteria, a non-literal interpretation was justified only

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when the literal view contradicted a demonstrated (irrefutable) fact. Hence it was incumbent on Galileo to produce demonstrative proof for his theory. This obviously was lacking and so conflict with scripture became a major issue. In fact, according to many scientists and scholars of the day, this was the most important objection to Copernicanism. For instance, in a letter to Galileo Cardinal Dini, Galileo's friend and staunch supporter, wrote in 1615: "One may write freely [about Copernicanism] as long as one keeps out of the sacristy." The same idea was conveyed to Galileo by his devoted friend Giovanni Ciampoli also in a letter in 1615: "Cardinal del Monte told us that he had discussed the question of Copernicanism at great length with Cardinal Bellarmine, and that they had concluded as follows: If you treat the system of Copernicus and set forth its proofs without bringing in the Scriptures, the interpretation of which is the business of qualified theologians, then you should not be opposed in any way whatever ...." Since the Jesuits by training and tradition were deeply committed to scripture as the word of God, this disagreement of Copernicanism with the Bible became a major reason for their reluctance to accept the new theory as a fact.

It seems that the most potent force to drive the Jesuit order to conservatism and rigidity with regard to modern science came from within the order itself. It was initiated by the then General of the Order Claudio Aquaviva (1543–1615) through two important official letters, the first one on May 24, 1611 and the second on December 14, 1613.

In his first letter he called upon all Jesuits to observe "uniform and solid doctrine," which meant following Thomism in theology and Aristotelianism in philosophy. Since geocentrism was an integral part of both, this stipulation anathematized any form of openness to Copernicanism. Finding the compliance with the letter of 1611 unsatisfactory, the Jesuit General issued a second one in which he said: "Whoever teaches views contrary to St. Thomas or who introduces new things into philosophy on his own initiative or from obscure authors is ordered to retract them immediately." Aquaviva pointed out that he was not issuing anything new, but was only reminding members of what was already asserted in previous

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General Congregations, particularly in Decree 41 of the Fifth General Congregation (1593–1594), and in the *Ratio Studiorum.*

Unfortunately for the Jesuits and for modern science this regressive move blunted the momentum of the progress of Jesuit science, and prevented them from becoming major contributors to the development of modern science, except for a few isolated individuals in different parts of the world. Clavius, Grienberger, etc. were affected by this order of the General. Galileo's friend Bardi wrote to him in 1614: "Fr. Grienberger told me that if the topic [of floating bodies] had not been treated by Aristotle (with whom, by order of the General, the Jesuits cannot disagree in any way but rather are obliged always to defend), he would have spoken more positively about the experiments because he was very favourably impressed by them."

This regressive attitude became the official policy for a long time, as was evident from the statements of Ignatius Visconti who was the General of the Society in the middle of the eighteenth century. In a letter of July 17, 1752, he reminded all of the need to adhere to Aristotelian physics.

Compounding all these factors was the official declaration against Copernicanism in 1616 and the condemnation of Galileo in 1633. These events and official proclamations had significant impact on the participation of the Catholic Church in the scientific revolution, and in a way determined the future course of the relationship between science and Christianity. Commenting on the nature of the obligation of the decree of 1633, John Baptist Riccioli, one of the leading scientists of the day, said: "As there has been no definition on the matter by the Sovereign Pontiff or by a General Council directed and approved by him, it is in no way of faith that the sun moves and the earth is motionless; at least the decree does not make it so but only, at most, the authority of Holy Scripture for those who are morally sure that God had revealed it to be so. Still, all Catholics are obliged by prudence and obedience ... not to teach categorically the opposite of what the decree lays down." On the Jesuits, particularly on Jesuit science, this condemnation had a lasting impact; it in a way guided their flourishing and progressive scientific

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work along an unproductive path. As Edward Grant points out, "It is well-known that many Jesuits found Copernican astronomy unobjectionable and perhaps even better founded than any other available system. But the aftermath of the condemnation of Galileo in 1633 saw Jesuit scientists pressured by the Roman Church to reinforce the Decree of 1633 by publishing books on the controversy, themselves emphasizing the religious aspect." There was a spate of books during the period after 1633 in which highly gifted Jesuit scientists went out of their way to defend geocentrism and attack heliocentrism. For instance, Athanasius Kircher, Niccolo Cabeo and Niccolo Zucchi used magnetic theory to argue for the immobility of the earth, although they realized that their arguments were not conclusive. Remarkable both in quality and quantity was the work done by Riccioli in his *Almagestum Novum* of 1651, in which he made an extensive study of the important arguments for and against the motion of the earth. He discussed 49 arguments in favour of a moving earth and 77 against it. Most of them were dismissed as inconclusive and valueless. However, 10 philosophical arguments he identified as definitely going against a moving earth. Stefano degli Angeli, a member of the Theatine Order, criticized Riccioli's work, pointing out that all his arguments were unconvincing. According to Angeli, the only good reason for rejecting Copernicanism was scriptural or theological. Whatever be the merit of Riccioli's monumental effort, "his significance for this study cannot be overestimated. Not only did Riccioli compose what may well be the most extensive and detailed defense of geocentric astronomy and cosmology ever written ... he was probably the last scientist of any standing to defend the centrality and immobility of the earth in a major astronomical treatise."

It is interesting to note that although this turn of events led to a tragic scientific regress, it did not drive the Jesuit scientists and astronomers back to the fold of diehard Aristotelians, because as John Russell points out, "by about 1630 nearly all astronomers and mathematically competent philosophers had abandoned both Aristotle and Ptolemy." Many of them leaned towards the Tychonic system. Tycho was unhappy with the Copernican system because of its scientific and religious problems, and developed his

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geoheliocentrism, according to which all the planets except the earth went around the sun, and the sun, in turn, went around the earth. Although his theory was physically unattractive and unrealistic, it was observationally indistinguishable from Copernicanism. The latter was mathematically simpler and physically superior, but suffered mainly from the absence of observed stellar parallax and the apparent conflict with the Bible. As Koestler remarks, Galileo was calling for a new worldview, but could not deliver one. It had to wait until Newton presented his theory. "Under these circumstances, the only possible policy was one of ordered retreat; to yield positions when they became untenable—such as the immutability of the sky, disproved by *novae*, comets and sunspots, and the earth as centre of all heavenly motion, disproved by the moons of Jupiter."

The tragic consequences of this turn of events for Jesuit science were obvious. They not only deprived the Jesuit order of the possibility of playing any major role in the development of modern science, but also isolated it irretrievably from the main currents of the scientific revolution. Had it not been for these events the history of the later tension between science and Catholicism would have been very different.

These developments had their echoes outside Europe too. As mentioned already, the Jesuits played a major role in bringing and planting modern science in India, at least until the British times, but because of their negative attitude towards Copernicanism they never tried to master it and so could not transmit it in India.

I have gone into this topic in some detail since the points discussed above can shed valuable light on the unanimous complaint raised against the Jesuits by several scholars. For instance, Virendra Nath Sharma writes: "The Jesuits did not bring the Copernican revolution with them to the country. In their correspondence there is not a single reference or comment to suggest that there were any Copernicans among them and as such discussed Kepler, Galileo or Newton with their hosts." Dhruv Raina, another important Indian scholar who has studied this issue, also complains in almost the same words: "We see no mention of Copernicus, Kepler or Galileo in their (the Jesuits) letters. In fact, during their expedition to Jaipur, it is

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not clear whether Peres Boudier and Pons even appraised Jai Singh of the Copernican System." R.K. Kochhar, another important Indian scholar on the topic, thinks that "the Jesuit mission was no doubt a failure from Jai Singh Sawai's point of view." His reason too is the failure of the Jesuits to make India participate in the scientific revolution of Europe. The only scholar with a different view is George M. Moraes in his paper titled "Astronomical Missions to the Court of Jaipur." While discussing the details of Rajah Jai Singh's initial contact with the Jesuit Manuel Figueredo, the Superior of the Mogor Mission, Moraes writes: "Jai Singh spoke to Father Figueredo of his researches and lamented the fact that on account of inadequacy of his knowledge or for want of appropriate instruments, he could not obtain accurate results. Figueredo referred him to the progress which his favourite studies had made in Europe, thanks to the researches of Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Galileo, and Newton." However, Moraes's statement seems to be based on inadequate sources. He gives reference to H. Hosten's *Jesuit Missionaries in Northern India* and to Edward Maclagen's *The Jesuits and the Great Mugul,* neither of which makes any mention of Copernicus. In Hoste's booklet we read: "Having heard from a Portuguese Missionary of the progress which his (Jai Singh's) favourite science had made in Portugal, he dispatched a scientific embassy to Lisbon." Obviously this quote has no direct reference to the Copernican system. Similar is the statement by Maclagan: "The Raja applied for aid to Father Emmanuel Figueredo, the Superior of the Mogor Mission, and Figueredo referred him to the latest results achieved by European investigators." This statement could refer to the developments in the Copernican system taking place in Europe, but not necessarily. Hence Moraes's claim is based more on reasonable guesswork than on actual records. In any case, the contributions made by the Jesuits to science in India during the 17th and 18th centuries showed no sign of any significant Copernican impact.

But the absence of the Copernican influence did not mean that the Christian contribution during this period was insignificant; it only meant that a great opportunity for greater development was missed. As we shall see, the contributions of the Christian scientists were

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substantial and significant, providing a much-needed boost to the otherwise sagging and stagnant traditional science of the land. It may be noted that in China also the Jesuit science remained non-Copernican; and yet their contributions to astronomy were so outstanding that the astronomer-trinity—Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), John Adam Schall von Bell (1591–1666) and Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–1688)—was accorded the rare honour of national heroes. In fact, the state-of-the-art observatory Verbiest set up in Peking (Beijing) in 1688 was of the world-class, being the fourth of its kind, coming after the ones in Leydon (1632), Copenhagen (1637), and Paris (1667). As Schreiber remarks, "it was a piquant coincidence, that contemporaneously with the erection of the Paris Observatory, Father Verbiest, SJ, in Peking, in the Kingdom of the Centre, was equipping a sister institution in up-to-date European style (1688)."

Some Important Christian Contributions to Science in India (17–18 Centuries)

Although many scholars admit that the contributions by foreign missionaries to science in India were very significant, so far they have not received much recognition. As Raina points put, "the scientific investigations of the Jesuits have for long been neglected." It may be noted that this neglect did not come because of lack of data and resources. The Jesuits usually kept quite accurate records of their activities and investigations. They regularly sent *Lettres Edifiantes* to their headquarters. In addition to the material appearing in the *Lettres* they published their scientific findings in scientific journals. But these remained almost completely confined to the archives of the Jesuits, attracting very little attention from scholars for further discussion and study. Perhaps the "old spirituality" of self-effacement and the sharp dichotomization of the world into the spiritual and the temporal, science being relegated to the inferior temporal realm, had something to do with this unfortunate neglect. For convenience sake, we will group their contributions to two categories: Contributions to modern physical sciences and to traditional Indian sciences.

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Contribution to Physical Sciences—Astronomy, Cartography and Surveying

As expected, the science and technology the missionaries brought to India carried the imprint of their motherland. Europe from the 15th to the 18th centuries gave high priority to practical or positional astronomy, thanks to the burgeoning navigational needs to seek out new territories for colonization and domination. Navigation required accurate maps of harbours, coasts, and islands, which in turn necessitated accurate observation of the position of certain stars, transits of certain planets, and the determination of longitudes and latitudes of locations. This area of science was quite developed in Europe during this period and many missionary scientists excelled themselves in this field. Cartographers used quadrants, sextants, telescopes, and chronometers to measure accurately the latitude and longitude of various locations. Many missionaries had these equipments in their possession.

It may be noted that map making was quite known in India, as was clear from the fact that Vasco da Gama's Indian pilot used an indigenous map for his maritime activities. But such portolano maps and land maps were inferior in accuracy and reliability. It has been pointed out that "despite the huge amount of information available [from travellers like Marco Polo, Peter de la Valle, John Fryer, Thevenot, Tavernier, Bernier and others], the general scientific aspects of the map of the country improved only as late as the 17th century. Even then they were far from reality as can be illustrated from their details: Philipe de la Trinite assures his readers 'that he had seen the Ganga at Goa, in the territory of Salcette' and in Bernier's map of Hindustan, we are surprised to see the Godavary which he styles as 'Guenga Fluvius,' flows in a north-easterly direction through Berar and join the Hughly river at its mouth." In India the problems were even more complex since there was no standardization of the mile, each region having its own measure.

S.N. Sen, the well-known historian of Indian astronomy, laments over the pathetic state of geographical knowledge available in India in the 18th century: "In the eighteenth century the pioneering efforts

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of reconstructing the geography of India along scientific lines were handicapped by the paucity of data on geographical latitudes and longitudes, particularly the latter, and, where available, by their unreliability." As was mentioned already, "The situation was further confused by the lack of a uniform standard of measuring distances. Not only did the measure of the Indian mile vary from that of its European counterparts, the Indian measure itself varied from regions to region." Those who looked for reliable geographical information were disappointed, as was evident from the letter of Ruben Burrow, a well-respected British astronomer who was credited with some of the most important longitude determinations, in 1783. Reporting to Warren Hastings he wrote: "The Surveys of India are known to be remarkably defective and there is great reason to believe that not a single place in India has had its Longitude properly determined except Pondicherry. The Latitudes are nearly in the same predicament, and indeed most of the English maps are made up of ideal chains of mountains and imaginary woods, taken piecemeal by pretended surveyors, and put together at random without either Longitude or Latitude, ... and geography is so little benefited by such maps that they are a nuisance rather than an advantage.' "

Given the above state of cartography in India, the contributions of European missionaries were outstanding indeed. According to Raymond Mercier, the Jesuit scientists' "geographical observations in particular were fundamental in effecting the revolution in the accuracy of longitudes.... The determinations of geographical longitudes were made by means of the timing of lunar eclipses and later, and much more accurately, by the timing of the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites by that planet." In addition to rendering this valuable and timely service by determining the longitudes and latitudes of many major cities and towns, they also made important contributions to astronomy by observing accurately many important celestial phenomena. Furthermore, some of them engaged themselves in the study of ancient Sanskrit texts on astronomy and other branches of science.

Another significant contribution in the field of observational astronomy was the introduction of the telescope. The Jesuits were

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the first ones to make use of the telescope in India, thereby augmenting remarkably the astronomical observations both qualitatively and quantitatively. The introduction and effective use of the telescope in India is significant because as Sharma points out, Raja Jai Singh, despite all his interest in accurate observational data, did not look upon the telescope as a powerful astronomical tool. "Jai Singh, impressed as he was with their mathematical prowess, failed to appreciate and incorporate the cross-hair fitted telescopic instruments in his own observational program." It is sad to note that these days the Indian astronomers, being too much entrenched in their own traditional practices, took a closed attitude towards the telescope and found their measuring instruments fitted with the Vernier and micrometer of little use. The effective and successful use of the telescope at the hands of the missionaries must have gone a long way towards breaking down the resistance of the Indian astronomers to the use of the telescope. I mention below a few of the most important scientists and their most valuable contributions.

Anthony Monserrate (1536–1600), born at Vie de Ozona near Monserrate in Catalonia (Spain), was the earliest Jesuit geographer in India. He entered the Jesuit order in 1558 and left for India in 1574. At the Mughal Emperor Akbar's request he was sent to Fatehpur Sikri as part of the first Jesuit mission in 1580. On his journey to Fatehpur Sikri he surveyed the areas on the way and took observations for latitude. Again he determined the geographical coordinates of about 100 positions when he accompanied Akbar from Fatehpur Sikri to Kabul in 1581. He was the first to complete a map of India around 1590. This small map of 5-1/2" x 4-1/8" was " a tremendous improvement on all previous efforts. It was based on actual observations rather than on traveller's tales." The importance and superior quality of this work can be gauged from the fact that "it gave a better idea of the Himalayas and of the upper course of the Punjab rivers than Rennell had done nearly 200 years later." However, R.H. Phillimore points out that it was "seriously out in longitude."

Anthony Rubino (1578–1643) from Italy engaged himself in the preparation of maps of the world already in the beginning of the

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seventeenth century. He took most enthusiastic interest in understanding the telescopic discoveries of Galileo and disseminating them to the scholarly world, particularly to China. As early as 1612 he made serious efforts to obtain a telescope from Europe and learn how to construct one. He had with him the ephemerides of Magini, the Paduan astronomer. A careful observer of heavenly phenomena like lunar eclipses, he tried to calculate the distance between Venice and the local towns by observing a number of lunar eclipses.

Tachard was a French scientist sent by Louis XIV to India and engaged himself in astronomical observations and the scientific study of the region during his stay in India from 1689 onwards.

Like Tachard, J. Richaud (1633–1693) also was sent by the French king as "mathematician of France" and had a great reputation for making accurate astronomical observations and studying the geography of the region. In 1689 he set up a 12-ft telescope in Pondicherry and made a number of important observations. According to Ansari, his most significant observations included the Comet of December 1689, the exact prediction of the lunar eclipse on April 4, 1689, the determination of the latitude and longitude of the cities of Pondicherry and Mylapore, the zodiacal lights at Pondicherry in 1690 and the Magellanic Clouds and two dark clouds toward Coalsack. However, perhaps historically the most important contribution of his was the discovery of the binary nature of *alpha-Centauri and alpha-Cruis* in 1689. *Alpha-Centauri* was the second binary ever discovered. According to Kochhar, "Richaud's was the first credited astronomical discovery in India."

Mauduit, another Jesuit astronomer of the 18th century, was also adept at making accurate astronomical observations and predicting heavenly phenomena. He claimed to have predicted accurately the lunar eclipse of March 23, 1701. He was noted for his determination of the longitudes of various places. Sharma thinks that he probably had access to the Rudolphine tables which were composed by Johannes Kepler using the accurate data of Tycho Brahe.

Jean-Venant Bouchet (1655–1732), born at Fontenay-le-Comte in France, joined the Jesuits in 1670 and came to India via Siam in 1689.

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He concentrated on surveying the Indian Southern Peninsula and prepared a map in 1722 which was considered to be "the first map of any merit." This was used by J.B. Bourguignon d'Anville (1697–1792) for his well-known *Carte de la Côte de Coromandel,"* published in Paris in 1753 and in London in 1754.

Jean Calmette worked in India from 1725 to 1740. In addition to making geographical observations and publishing a map of Southern India, he engaged himself in astronomy and mathematics. His reputation prompted the astronomer king Jai Singh to correspond with him on scientific issues like the geometrical foundations of La Hire's tables.

Claude Stanislaus Boudier (1686–1757), a native from Sens in France, came to India in 1718, and started his work at Chandernagore in Bengal. Considered the most important French contributor to science in India, he had a 17-ft telescope, an astronomical timepiece and an aperture gnomon, which he carried with him during his 1000-mile long trip with his colleague and countryman Jean Francois Pons (1698–1753) from Chandernagore to Jaipur. During this trip he determined the longitudes and latitudes of 63 Indian cities as well as the meridional altitude of a few stars. He also measured the altitudes of prominent stars and observed the first satellite of Jupiter on April 2, 1734, at Fatehpur and again at Jaipur on August 15, 1734, in addition to recording an eclipse of the sun in Delhi on May 3, 1734 and an eclipse of the moon on December 1, 1732. He had close contact with the well-known Jesuit scientist Antoine Gaubil in China and shared data with him. Although according to Gaubil, Boudier was "much mistaken with respect to the diameter of the sun and the obliquity of the ecliptic ... had not then any knowledge of the aberration of the stars," both D'Anville and Tieffenthaler used his data extensively. Furthermore, Boudier and Pons tried to standardize the Indian mile.

Joseph Tieffenthaler (1710–1785), born at Botzen in Tyrol, came to India in 1743. During his 42 years in India he did extensive work in astronomy and geography. According to Moonis Raza, "he was a keen observer of geographical phenomena, had the background to understand them and had the ability to express them lucidly. His

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descriptions are known for their accuracy and are based on an acute sensitivity to and perception of the Indian reality." He undertook more than 16 exploratory trips, kept clear records of more than 240 towns and villages. Like those before him, he too took a keen interest in the determination of latitudes and longitudes. John Bernoulli, the well-known astronomer and member of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Berlin and of the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg, "found the works of Tieffenthaler so much up to the mark that he actually undertook to translate and annotate several of them."

Tieffenthaler is credited to have written 40 works among which the *Historical and Geographical Description of Hindustan* in three volumes with well-prepared maps was the most famous. James Rennell made use of his maps for his *Memoris of Hindustan.*

Tieffenthaler was supposed to serve Raja Jai Singh at his observatories, but the premature death of the Raja put an end to this plan. However, he was quite acquainted with Jai Singh's initiatives. According to Ansari, "most probably Tieffenthaler could also use the instruments at Jai Singh's observatories at Delhi, Jaipur, Ujjain, Benaras and Mathura, on which he reported fairly well."

A versatile scholar that he was, Tieffenthaler was familiar with the post-renaissance European astronomy and oriental astronomy. He also knew many languages like German, Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, Hindustani, Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. This enabled him to serve as a link between the Eastern and Western scientific traditions and compose a Latin monograph on Indian astronomy and astrology.

Commenting on the contribution of Tieffenthaler, S.N. Sen writes: "Tieffenthaler, like D'Anville, not only endeavoured to make the most of the materials of the Persian and Indian geographers, but undertook to improve upon the existing tables of latitudes and longitudes by determining them himself in the course of his extensive travels in the country." At the same time Sen points out that there were occasions when he seemed to have undervalued certain past achievements of Indian astronomers.

Francis Wendel who came to India in 1751 and died in 1803 was noted particularly for his high quality maps, which were used by Rennell for preparing the map of Hindustan.

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Raja Sawai Jai Singh (1688-1743) and the Jesuit Scientists

Perhaps the most notable instance of Jesuit contribution to the development of science in India in the eighteenth century was the Jesuit collaboration with Raja Sawai Jai Singh, the statesman astronomer, who made a valiant and all-out attempt to inject new life into astronomy in India in order to bring it on a par with Western astronomy. Jai Singh himself was a gifted astronomer and made every effort to get the best of experts, facilities, and equipments to achieve his ambitious program. He had observatories built in Jaipur, Delhi, Mathura, Benares, and Ujjain. A man of true universal scientific spirit, he rose above all barriers of race, religion, and colour to remain fully open to Hindu as well as Muslim astronomical traditions.

Since he found both the Hindu and Muslim traditions inadequate to meet his expectations, he approached the Portuguese Jesuit Manuel Figueredo who was the superior of the mission at Agra. Figueredo readily apprised him of the great astronomical developments taking place in Europe. Thereupon the king asked Figueredo to lead a delegation to Portugal to plead with the king to send outstanding astronomers to India. Figueredo returned to Jaipur in July 1731, bringing with him not only instruments, books, and astronomical tables, but also Pedro de Silva, a medical man well versed in astronomy, and his son Xavier. Among the astronomical tables was a copy of the second edition (1702) of *Tabulae Astronomicae* of De La Hire (1640–1718), a well-known French astronomer at the Paris Observatory.

Despite certain limitations, the king was pleased with this collaboration, and asked for more assistance from the Jesuits to tackle some of the unresolved problems. "In 1733, Jai Singh invited two of the French Jesuit Fathers of Chandernagore to come and help him in his observations on a coming eclipse." On January 6, 1734 Frs. Pons and Claude Boudier came to Jaipur. However ill health forced them to cut short their stay and return to their original base. Undeterred by all these difficulties, Jai Singh persisted in his efforts to get help from Europe to fulfill his astronomical dreams. This time he approached the Jesuit headquarters in Rome through

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the Portuguese Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil. Two Bavarian Jesuits, Frs. Anthony Gabelsberger (1704–1741) and Andrew Strobl (1703–1752), were sent to India. "Strobl claims to have satisfied the Raja with his computations but does not elaborate as to what the computations were for."

In addition to assisting Jai Singh in his astronomical projects, the Jesuits helped him in the translation of several important books and tables from the West. They also must have introduced him to the use of logarithms. According to Strobl, Jai Singh had chalked out extensive plans for more comprehensive collaboration with the Jesuits. For instance, he mentions that the Raja was so impressed by the service rendered by the European Jesuits that he had decided to appoint European mathematicians in each of his five observatories. Also he had decided to approach the Jesuit General in Rome to get Jesuits "knowledgeable in mathematics whom he would then appoint head of the observatories that were to be established throughout the realm." Furthermore, the Raja had plans to send a second delegation to Europe under Strobl to the 'Roman Emperor' and to the Pope in order to establish friendly relations. But the sudden, premature death of Jai Singh in 1743 put an end to all these plans.

Some Contributions of Christians to the Traditional Indian Sciences

Although indigenous Indian astronomy at the period under our discussion was not so developed as its counterparts in Europe, and suffered from certain deficiencies, the Indian astronomical tradition has always been rich and remarkable, thanks to an impressive line of great names like Aryabhata (b. 476 AD), Brahmagupta (b. 598 AD), Bhaskaracarya I (fl. 629 AD), Lalla (fl. 8th century AD), Vatesvara (fl. 900 AD), Sripati (fl. 1000 AD), Bhaksaracarya II (b. 1114 AD), etc. Some of the Christian scientists made painstaking efforts to study and appreciate this rich tradition and to make it known to the rest of the world.

Right from the beginning many missionaries made special effort to master the Sanskrit language and study important Sanskrit

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writings, including scientific books. Robert De Nobili studied Sanskrit already in the beginning of the 17th century. Following his lead many other talented Jesuits like H. Roth, Beschi, Calmette, Coeurdoux, Pons, Mosac, Bischopinck, Hanxleden, Pimentel, Hausegger, Tieffenthaler and others also learned this language. Since several of these were also scientists, it is quite natural that they applied themselves to reading and learning the Sanskrit scientific texts. Several of them wrote reports and commentaries on them for the benefit of their counterparts in Europe. Some of the texts were translated into European languages. Mention has already been made to the contribution of Tieffenthaler in this regard. He also wrote accurate and authoritative reports on the main instruments of Jai Singh.

The Jesuit scientists brought several important scientific works from Europe and translated them into Indian languages. As already mentioned, Emmanuel Figueredo brought along with him from Europe books on astronomy and astronomical tables, including copies of Napier's logarithms and De La Hire's *Tabulae Astronomicae.* The French Jesuit Joseph du Bois, working for Jai Singh from 1730 was charged with translating these tables. In addition to his scientific work, Pons who also spent some time at Jai Singh's observatory along with Boudier compiled a Sanskrit grammar and a treatise on Sanskrit poetics.

Dhruv Raina writes about an important Sanskrit manuscript which Tachard took along with him to Paris from Thailand when he visited Louis XIV in 1687. This manuscript contained the rules for computing solar and lunar longitudes. This important document caught the attention of Gian-Dominique Cassini, the director of the Paris Observatory. A study on the manuscript showed that the metonic cycles were known to the Indians. Cassini estimated the length of the sidereal year and this figure was in agreement with the value obtained in the *Paulisa Siddhanta* of Varahamihira. All these have led later scholars to conclude that the computational rules were derived from the *Paulisa Siddhanta.*

The Jesuit scholars Patouillet and Xavier Duchamp sent reports of Sanskrit manuscripts to Jean-Sylvain Bailly, Jean-Baptiste

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Delambre and Laplace. It is said that such reports became the principal source for Bailly's *Traite de l'astronomie indienne et Orientale* of 1787 and Delambre's *Histoire d'astronomie ancienne*, of 1817. All these interactions contributed towards building a bridge between the East and the West.

The Printing Technology

Block-printing was invented by the Chinese and was practiced in Tibet and Nepal long before Gutenbeg invented printing by movable type in 1448. As in the case of modern Western astronomy and other branches of science, it was the Jesuits who introduced modern printing technology by movable type in India. "A Spanish Coadjutor Brother, Juan de Bustamante, brought from Europe the material of the first printing-press with movable types which appeared in India. It started work in 1556, by printing the philosophical theses for a public disputation of our students." The first press was in Goa, but soon others were started at Vaipicota, Rachol, Cochin, Ambalacata, Angamale and Cranganore. At first the books were printed in Portuguese, but later it was done in Indian languages like Malayalam, Tamil, Konkani, etc. No doubt, the technology was originally brought for the purpose of promoting the religious goal. But soon it was put at the service of wider circles for the benefit of all groups and all subjects.

Christian Contribution to Science in India from the 20th Century onwards

The Christian involvement in science in India continued to grow deeper and wider with time especially from the end of the 19th century. There was a marked increase both in the number of institutions and gifted persons involved. It must be noted that a study of this type will remain very incomplete, mainly because as far as I know no systematic and detailed study has been done on this point and because it is an ongoing process. We will group this contribution into sections like the Life Sciences and Natural History, the Physical Sciences and Science Education.

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The Life Sciences

For a number of decades starting from the concluding years of the 19th century, the Sacred Heart College of Shembaganur, Tamil Nadu, became the epicentre of great scientific activity. It in a way became a rich nursery of many future scientists. Their contributions were particularly valuable in the field of plant taxonomy. I discuss briefly some of the creative pioneers and active participants of this important scientific ferment.

Fr. Mallat

He arrived in Shembaganur in 1891 and was professor there from 1899 to 1904. He insisted on the study of the positive sciences and set a shining example to his students by his own assiduous application to these sciences. "His collections of insects, presumably from Europe to begin with, still in the Shembaganur museum, were its first ever collection." His work inspired students like Astruc and Roinè, and the era of "insect-catchers" was ushered in.

Fr. Louis Anglade (1873–1953)

His arrival in Shembaganur in 1909 inaugurated a new era as far as studies in Natural History in the Palni Hills were concerned. He succeeded in building up an extensive collection from 1915 to 1919. "These pioneer collections from the Palnis were named at the Calcutta and at the Kew (UK) herbaria. The original list of these identifications gives the following break-up figures: S. Münch (154); A. Anglade (707); A. Saulière (1707); C.J. Montaud (210); and P. Rodriguez (166)." Furthermore, Anglade gave his classic illustrations of the plant of the Palni Hills in 1910 plates bound in 10 volumes. Added to these was a collection named the "library of timbers" consisting of over 300 kinds of timber from the Palni Hills, cut, polished and arranged like books. His collection of the skeletons of many animals and his work on the dolmens of the Lower Palnis were also important contributions to science.

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The Moss-Collectors of Shembaganur

A five-man team, nicknamed the "moss-gatherers," consisting of G. Andrè, J. Queste, A. Vellè, G. Roinè, and G. Foreau did an outstanding work collecting the various mosses of the region which were later identified. "Among these mosses many were new to science. These hitherto undescribed mosses, consisting of 4 genera, 95 species and 15 varieties, were described by Potier de la Varde during 1922-28 and Dixon & Potier de la Varde in 1927 and 1930." K.M. Mathew, SJ, continued this work and brought the enumeration to an impressive 424 species.

Fr. G. Foreau (1885–1950)

Foreau was one of the members of the moss-gatherers and his collection of mosses was very impressive. In addition to that, he had an outstanding collection of algae, mushrooms and other fungi, and lichens. About his algae collection, Fr. Frèmy after doing a detailed study, wrote: "The collections of Fr. Foreau are an exceptional contribution to the knowledge of the Cyanophyceae of South India; in fact, they consist of 31 species, varieties or forms not so far known for the region. Of these 15 species, varieties or forms are here described as new to science."

Fr. Rapinat (1892–1959)

Originally from France, he was not only a well-known plant collector and illustrator, but also an outstanding plant physiologist. He was also a creative designer of machines. Some of the original instruments he designed long ago on chromotography, photosynthesis, fermentation, etc., are still in use.

Fr. H. Satapau (1892–1970)

Santpau was a Spanish Jesuit who served at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. His contributions to plant taxonomy were widely recognized. The government of India appointed him as the Director of the Botanical Survey of India.

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Fr. Cecil Saldahna (1930–2001)

He was a well-recognized plant taxonomist and served the government of India on several official bodies and on many missions. His contributions to preserve the environment were very much recognized.

Fr. Leo D'Souza (!930–)

A Jesuit from Karnataka, he specializes in tissue culture. He was able to raise plants like breadfruit and cashew nuts through artificial medium in the laboratory for the benefit of farmers.

Fr. K.M. Mathew, (1931–2004)

Director of Rapinat Herbarium at St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapally, Tamil Nadu, he was a highly-regarded plant taxonomist. His contributions to environmental concerns were nationally and internationally recognized.

Fr. V.S. Manickam (1944–)

A specialist in ferns, he has done extensive research and published many books and papers. He is the Director of the Centre for Biotechnology and Biodiversity at St. Xavier's College, Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu.

Fr. Ignacimuthu (1948–)

Although he was trained in botany, he specializes in plant biotechnology. Author of many books and research papers, he is the Director of the Entomology Research Institute, Loyola College, Chennai. He was the former Vice Chancellor of Madras University.

To this must be added names like Fr. Mathew Maleparambil, St.Thomas College, Palai, Kerala, Sr. Doris D'Souza, AC, Patna Women's College, Patna, Bihar, Fr. John Britto, SJ, of St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapally, Fr. Vincent Braganza, SJ, of St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad, etc. As noted already, this list is incomplete.

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The Physical Sciences

Fr. Francis Leaurent (1886–1963)

He was a French Jesuit who came to India in 1904 and served in the Madurai mission. He was an ingenious designer and maker of scientific instruments.

Fr. Charles Racine (1897–1976)

Like many scientists discussed already he also was a Jesuit from France who came to India in 1934 and served the mathematics departments at St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli and Loyola College, Chennai. His research activities were in the field of relativity, celestial mechanics, etc.

Fr. Lourdu M. Yeddanapalli (1904–1970)

He was an Indian Jesuit who had extensive training in the US in the field of chemistry. He did valuable research in chemical kinetics, high polymers, chemisorption, heterogeneous catalysis, adsorption of polar gases on collagens, and paper chromatographic studies of amino acids and proteins. He was a fellow of a number of national and international professional bodies.

To the above list we can add names like Fr. Francis Xavier, SJ, one of the Founding Fathers of Loyola Institute of Frontier Energy (LIFE) that is engaged in producing new and cost-effective sources of energy, particularly to meet the needs of the third world, Fr. G.A. Savariraj, SJ, of St. Joseph's Tiruchirapalli, Fr. John Pragasam, SJ, of Loyola, Chennai, etc.

Contribution to Science Education

Perhaps one of the most valuable contributions Christianity has been rendering to science in India is in the field of science education. There were many outstanding scientists among the Jesuits who dedicated themselves to teaching science and inspiring and initiating

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so many of their students to become outstanding scientists nationally and internationally. So many of the leading Indian scientists were products of Christian institutions of higher education. To mention a few, Abdul Kalam, the past present President of India, Chidambaram, Kasturi Ranjan, Paul Ratnasamy, etc. were trained in Christian colleges and received their inspiration from their able and dedicated science teachers. I discuss briefly some of them.

Fr. Eugene Lafont (1837–1908)

Lafont was a Jesuit from Belgium who worked at St. Xavier's College, Kolkata (Calcutta). He was one of the cofounders of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS) in 1876. "It was the scientific wing of the Indian Association, which was a political organization of educated Indians and a precursor of the Indian National Congress. Its aim was to enable the "Natives of India to cultivate science in all departments with a view to its advancement by original research." He also took the initiative to set up St. Xavier's College Observatory, in Kolkata in 1879.

Fr. D. Honore (1862–1934)

A French Jesuit who came to India in 1880, Honore was an excellent professor at the Department of Physics in St. Joseph's College. Under his leadership St. Joseph's became one of the leading physics departments in the country. India's Nobel laureate Sir. C.V. Raman paid rich tribute to his accomplishment in the following words: "St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli, had played a great part in the development of higher education in Southern India. Many of its former alumni who have taken the Honours Course in Physics from that college have subsequently been research students in my laboratory and achieved conspicuous success. They now hold distinguished positions in various parts of India."

Some of the other eminent science educators were Fr. Augustine Haas (1869–1957), Fr. Charles Pruvot (1871–1949), Fr. Schneider, Fr. Caius. It may be noted that practically all the Jesuits scientists

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mentioned earlier were also outstanding teachers of science who inspired their students through their ideas and personal life style and values. Of special note is Charles Racine who inspired many to take up science as a career, especially the mathematical sciences. Many outstanding scientists at TIFR (Tata Institute of Fundamental Research) have given grateful credit to him for inspiring and guiding them to take up their scientific career.

Scientific Institutions

The Trichi Museum

The Trichi Museum is considered to be of international standard with many rare collections to its credit. Fr. J. Castets (1858–1936) was its first curator. Among its most important holdings are fauna (mammals, birds, snakes, fishes, lizards, chameleons, scorpions, spiders, butterflies, and moths) and many other rare items like two pieces of wood from the London bridge that was burnt down in 1230, a Roman lamp, etc. An extensive collection of minerals from several continents is another important attraction in this museum.

St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, Observatory (1879)

The Jesuit college in Kolkata took the initiative to set up one of the oldest observatories in India. The Italian astronomer P. Tacchini of Palermo Observatory suggested to Eugene Lafont "the advisability of erecting a Solar Observatory in Calcutta, in order to supplement the Observations made in Europe, by filling up the gaps caused in the series of solar records by bad weather." Lafont took the suggestion to heart and set to work on building up the observatory with a 9" refractor by Steinhill of Munich to which was adapted a large reversible spectroscope by Browning. This observatory did "painstaking if not very striking work, thanks to the customary thoroughness and dedication of the Jesuit men of science."

Research Institutes

Many Christian institutions of higher education have well-acclaimed research institutes in the sciences. The Entomology Research

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Institute of Loyola College Chennai is internationally recognized. Mention has already been made of LIFE, also of Loyola. Similar research centers are attached to the colleges of Tiruchirapalli, Palayamkottai, Mangalore, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, etc. Another Christian college doing excellent work in scientific research is the Ahmednagar College in Maharashtra.

It may be noted that the list given above contains mostly priests only. A complete and comprehensive study should certainly include the many lay Christian scientists who have rendered and still rendering significant service to science in India, eminent scientists like Dr. Paul Ratnasamy, Former Director of National Chemical Laboratory, Pune, Dr. K.L. Sebastian, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Dr. Babu Joseph, former Vice Chancellor of Cochin University of Science and Technology, etc. Such a comprehensive study will be taken up later.

Some Concluding Remarks

Today India is one of the leading nations in the area of science and technology, despite being a third world country facing enormous challenges from practically every corner. Some studies accord India the 11th place among the most industrialized nations with the third largest number of scientists and engineers. In the software industry India is second only to the US. India's place in other fields like space technology, nuclear power, IT, etc., is too well known to need any special discussion. Our study shows that the Christians have been contributing significantly in establishing and strengthening the great scientific tradition, especially of modern science, in India. We have seen that the great work of the Christian scientist-missionaries from the 17th to the 19th centuries was a shot in the arm to science in India. From the end of the 19th century onwards Christian educational and scientific institutions have been functioning not only as world-class training centres, but also as powerful inspirational centres through the personal examples and ideas of the Christian teachers and practitioners of science, providing strong motivation to budding scientists to engage in scientific work.

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Thanks to the keen interest and professional scientific training of the Christian missionaries, several scientific ideas and techniques were made available in India within a short period of their appearance in Europe. For instance, we have seen Rubino making an all out effort to get hold of a telescope or at least the technique for making one, as soon as he heard of Galileo's discoveries in 1612. Richaud set up a 12-ft telescope in Pondicherry as early as 1689. The Christian contribution to cartography and geographical survey of various unexplored places was also remarkable. The data they provided were more accurate, the instruments they introduced were of superior quality, the techniques they used were more reliable. We have seen that Jai Singh was fully convinced of this superior quality, which explains his persistent efforts at better and wider collaboration with Christian scientists.

The geographical, astronomical, and other scientific works of the Jesuit missionaries served as a powerful impetus to later initiatives in various fields, especially by governmental agencies. For instance, much progress was made in the field of cartography and geographical survey of various parts of the country during the period following the works of the scientists we discussed above. The outstanding pioneering works of the missionaries must have served as the foundation and inspiration for these subsequent developments. As S.N. Sen remarks, "All these activities would have without doubt delighted the early eighteenth century pioneers like Joseph Tieffenthaler who were trying to find their bearings to develop Indian geography on solid foundations."

However, it must be admitted that the science they transmitted remained very much amateurish and mediocre, compared to what was available in Europe at that time. More specifically, they failed to transmit the revolution-making Copernican theory to India, thereby depriving India of the opportunity to participate in the revolutionary developments that were transforming the world of science in Europe. They were basically engaged in doing mostly "normal science" based on the old medieval paradigm. Their conceptual field was still very much imprisoned in the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic worldview. Their science failed to participate significantly in the scientific revolution

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afoot in contemporary Europe. Most of the works they did could have been achieved without effecting any transformation in the worldview, being items about which it made no significant difference whether mobility was attributed to the sun or to the earth.

Practically all the scientists and scholars we discussed in this essay were priests and members of Christian religious congregations, and as such it could be said that they worked as members and representatives of the official Christian Church, rather than as private individuals. The most natural question that emerges in this context is: what impact did their religion have on their science? Our study reveals that this impact was a mixed one. On the one hand, the religious compulsions from the higher authorities were in some instances regressive and clipped the wings of their creativity. Their commitment to their religion forced them to take a negative attitude to the Copernican theory, placing serious limitations to the contributions they could have made to the development of science in India. On the other hand, religion had a positive influence on these scientists. It gave them tremendous motivation and energy to engage in serious scientific work with remarkable success. The science they engaged in was by no means alien to their religious principles. For instance, St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order to which most of the scientists we discussed belonged, had a very positive attitude towards nature and to science which is the study of nature. For instance, his well-known "*Contemplatio ad amorem*" (Contemplation for attaining love) calls for an extremely positive attitude towards nature. Ingatius's biographers tell us that he took special delight in watching the stars at night. In fact, in the Jesuit tradition study of nature was an integral part of their spiritual and intellectual formation—they looked upon the Book of Scripture and Book of Nature as complementary to each other.

Although in many ways they were highly professional in their scientific work, they realized that their religious duties came first, and science was only their second priority. No one has articulated this point more clearly than Tieffenthaler: "Next to the salvation of souls and their conquest for God, nothing has afforded me greater pleasure than the study of the geographical position of places, the

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variation of the winds, the nature of the soil, and the character and manners of the regions through which I am travelling.... I have spared no trouble, and undergone great hardships to disclose the mysteries of nature thereby to acquire a greater knowledge of the Creator and fix my mind on things heavenly." To our current sensitivities, the language of Tieffenthaler may smack of a kind of proselytization. However, there is very good reason to believe that these scientists remained professional in their pursuit, and never used their science to force anyone to change his/her religion. True, they used their scientific expertise as an entry-point to influential centres. They valued their religious faith and were eager to share it with others of good will. But I have not come across any record showing that they put religious returns or rewards as a condition for doing scientific work, not even in the case of Raja Jai Singh.

Many of these scientists and scholars could rise above the narrow boundaries of religion, race and culture. We find Robert de Nobili and others mastering the Sanskrit language and the Indian scriptures and recognizing their rich and profound wisdom, and sharing it with their counterparts in Europe. Many of them were bridge-builders between the East and the West.

Religion certainly had some limiting effects on their science; but still they were able to make a substantial contribution to the development of science in India. Our study leads us to conclude that although religion involves restrictive forces, it is open and broad-minded enough to encourage its adherents to engage seriously and productively in scientific activity. It also shows that science is open-minded and universal enough to welcome into its fold all groups having a positive attitude towards nature.

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P.K. Mohapatra

Bhakta Kavi Madhusudan: Plea for Divinity and Morality

Bhakta Kavi Madhusudan Rao (1853–1912) was a prominent personality of modern Oriya literature. In fact, after the end of *Bhanja Yuga* in Orissa's literary scene, Madhusudan Rao and Radhanath Roy were the two most influential architects of modern Oriya literature, especially in the department of poetry, and along with Fakir Mohan Senapati, they constitute the vibrant trio of modern Oriya literature. But more than mere literary excellence, Madhusudan's numerous poems and verses radiate philosophic brilliance of a unique kind—that of divine ideology, which was some sort of pantheism and, arising out of it, a robust optimism which has been described as *ānandavāda.* Because of his divine depiction of whatever he wrote on—be it human affairs or natural phenomena—he came to be known as *Bhakta Kavi,* the poet whose poems reflected strong belief in and devotion to God Almighty. It was a belief supported by the argument from design and other such arguments philosophers have variously adduced for the existence of God. Thus, more often than not, his poems were couched on philosophical (metaphysical) groundings. Indeed, his poems*—most notably "*Jivana Chinta*" (reflections on life). "*Risiprāné Devāvataraṇa*"

*All his poems referred to in what follows have been compiled in *Madhusudan Granthavali* (*MG* hereafter), 1st edn, compiled by Mrutyunjay Rath and published by Students' Store, Brahmapur, Orissa, 1915. Unless otherwise mentioned, page references will be to this edition.

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(descent of the divine in the life of a saint) and "*Himāchalé Udaya Utsava*" (festivities of sunrise on the Himalayas)—obliterate the line of distinction between philosophy and literature and illustrate the fact that literature is at its best when based on philosophy. Most of his writings are like those of Tolstoy, Nietzsche and Sartre etc., where no answer in "Yes or No" is possible to the question "Is this philosophy or literature?" For this reason, it is no wonder that the *Bhagvadgītā* is considered by many as the world's greatest literature.

Life and Character

It was the day of *Sri Panchami,* a day of serene festivities throughout India, the day the whole country celebrates the advent of spring and the worship of Saraswati, the goddess of learning. On this day, the 29 January 1853 in Puri, the seat of Lord Jagannath, was born a child in a Marhatta family domiciled in Orissa for several generations. True to the day of his birth, this child, named Madhusudan, showed extraordinary interest and talent in learning and, later on, teaching and true to the place of his birth, he grew up as a deeply religious and moral person with the temperament and inclinations of a *ṛṣī.*

At the tender age of five, Madhusudan lost his mother, the virtuous Ambika Bai, and was sent to be brought up at his maternal uncle's house in Puri along with younger brother Jagannath—father Bhagirathi Rao having had to stay back at Atharanala working as a junior police officer. Later, Bhagirathi was posted at the police station at Gope in Puri district and brought back the two children under his personal care. Madhusudan's education started in a *chātashāli* in Gope. Although this was an improvised place for learning, Madhusudan took exceptional interest in whatever was taught to him and in the short span of a year, acquired all that was to be learnt in the *chātashāli.* Soon thereafter Bhagirathi Rao was transferred to Bhubaneswar. Madhusudan was admitted into a school there. His talent and interest in studies impressed Mr. Wodrow, the then Inspector of Schools, who arranged for his education free of fees, in Puri Zilla School. Besides this giving him a good opportunity to study in a school of repute, this marked a

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turning point in Madhusudan's life; for it was here that he met Radhanath Roy who not only greatly influenced his life and character but later became his compatriot and preceptor in Orissa's literary scenario—both together became the chief architects of modern Oriya literature. While studying at Puri Zilla School, he also came in contact with Pandit Harihara Das, an erudite scholar in Vedant philosophy and Sanskrit literature. Along with Radhanath Roy, who by this time had become his teacher in the said school, he used to meet Harihara and discuss philosophy, religion and literature. Harihara was learned and wise but he was a critical scholar and adept in the art of logic and argumentation, which made him an aggressive atheist. Despite great reverence for Pandit Harihara, whom he called his *jñānadātā* or real guru, this last aspect of his personality disturbed the young devoted mind of Madhusudan. An instinctive believer and *bhakta* that he was, he used to get upset about Harihara's atheism. He once dreamt—a prophetic dream (!)—that Harihara was restlessly running with a burning log of wood on his shoulder in the *Bada Dānda*, the grand road leading to the temple of Lord Jagannath, throwing away bits of burning fire at the onlookers. It so happened that a short-time thereafter, Harihara actually got burnt in a tragic accident and died. Deeply disturbed by the negative impact of logic and *nyāya*, he wrote in his poem "Parama Pramāṇa", presumably aiming at Pandit Harihara:

"Duré fingi abhimāna pramaṇa pramāda
Pada āsi sé ananta prabhu pāda talé
Hé chatura sudhi, chhādi vichāra chāturi
Bhunja mahānandé mahā vishwāsa mādhuri".
(*MG*, p. 228)

(Cast away the arrogance and error of logical proofs and take shelter at the holy feet of God eternal; give up the trickery of argumentation, oh, wise scholar, and enjoy the bliss of faith with glee and ecstacy.)

Madhusudan was always a votary of truth and God, and *faith* for him was the way to truth—not the trickery of logic and argumentation.

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During his college days at Cuttack High School, now called the Ravenshaw Collegiate School, he came under the influence of Prof. Haranath Bhattacharya who taught philosophy and Professor Raj Kishore Bandopadhyaya, an inspiring teacher of English literature. Haranath later became the single greatest influence for Madhusudan to take up Brahma Dharma. It was during this period that he got the illustrious Pyari Mohan Acharya as his classmate in the F.A. course, with whom the bond of intimate ideological friendship remained unbroken throughout their life time. In fact Madhusudan was present by Pyari Mohan's side at the time of his death and Pyari Mohan too was present at Madhusudan's death bed—in the latter's dream. Both of them were the founders of Brahma Dharma in Orissa, and both took leading parts in social, religious and literary reforms in Orissa.

It appears that Madhusudan's initiation into Brahma Dharma was occasioned by two factors during his school days. While studying in Puri he used to meet a wise mendicant, Hari Das, who lived in a *math* near the temple of Lord Jagannath. Driven by uncontrollable quest for knowledge and thirst for the divine, young Madhusudan frequently went to him and asked him to explain the *niti ślokas*. As the wise man went on explaining the meanings of the *ślokas* to him, Madhusudan gradually got convinced of the truth and value of monotheism. The second factor responsible for his leanings towards Brahma Dharma was the impact of *Buddhacharita* on him—an impact effectively created by the impressive teaching of history by none other than Radhanath Roy. The life and teachings of the Buddha inspired him with humanism and *karuṇā*. Later, in the course of a lecture he delivered in the Town Hall of Cuttack, Madhusudan justified his preference and appreciation for Buddhism by saying that, while Jesus said he was the son of God, Mohammad said he was the prophet of God and Krishna said he was God himself, Buddha was distinctively different in that he claimed himself to be a fellow human being and spread the message of universal love and upliftment of man by good conduct and virtuous living. Added to these, there was the influence—though indirect—of Pandit Harihara whose astute atheism and criticism of ritualism of the priests must have made his sense of *dharma* sharpened and his mind critical of the conventional

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practices of Hindu religion. However, his eventual change to Brahma Dharma never made him intolerantly indifferent to Hinduism or even to its practice of idol worship. On the contrary, he showed great respect and appreciation for the other point of view. In response to highly arrogant, critical remarks of Pandit Nilakantha Dash against the spurious rituals and superstitions perpetuated by the priestly tradition, Madhusudan had said, "there is a soul of truth even in superstition." In fact Madhusudan had a lot of respect for true faith and *bhakti* (which for him was the sure way to *jñāna*) and genuine moral sense; but he treated with contempt hypocrisy in matters religious. He used to often say that those educated people, who know fully well that the rituals are not the real *dharma* but adopt them nonetheless for fear of society and the religious powers that be, are immoral cowards worthy of contempt, but the naïve illiterates who accept them (rituals and superstitions) to be *dharma* and worship with genuine faith deserve understanding, appreciation and respect. This shows not only his liberal mind and openness but also his appreciation of the true import of religion as distinct from its corrupting surface features.

An ardent lover and seeker of knowledge, Madhusudan was also an ideal teacher who took to as a holy mission in his personal as well as professional life. The uniqueness of most of his poems and verses lies in their didactic, educative value—both in their language and spirit. With the expressed intention of instilling moral and religious sense and the ideal of the good life into the minds of young children, many of his poems and verses were written as text book materials, and many others were loaded with lofty ideals of divinity and morality that inspired and educated young and old alike. The latter category of poems, full of serious philosophical reflections on life, God and spirituality, reveal not only the philosopher in him but also the *ṛṣī* or spiritual teacher in the poet par excellence: "*Risiprāné Devāvataraṇa*" (*MG*, pp. 181–87), "*Himāchalé Udaya Utsava*" (*MG*, pp. 255–60) and "*Jivana Chintā*" (*MG*, pp. 126–31) can compare with some of the best works of world literature.

It is not that Madhusudan was a teacher merely at the ideational-intellectual level, he was very successful in the practical sphere also

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with innovative ideas to make teaching fruitful and to improve the quality of education so as to make it conducive for building of character and personality. Early in life, at the age of 18, he started his teaching career as the 3rd teacher in his *alma mater*, Puri Zilla School, and very soon earned an enviable reputation and respect of his students. Thereafter he was appointed as the headmaster of an M.E. School in Jajpur subdivision. Later on, he joined as the 2nd teacher in Balasore Zilla School. His service in Balasore proved significant for several reasons. It is here that he came in contact with Fakir Mohan Senapati and Raja Baikuntha Nath Dey, two illustrious sons of Orissa. And to his greatest delight, it was in this school that Madhusudan was reunited with his mentor, Radhanath Roy. The congregation of so many greats was bound to yield rich results. For very soon, Balasore became the lively center for literary activities and production of effective, educative literature and text book materials. It was during this time that Madhusudan published his *Prabandhamālā* (a collection of essays) which became useful text book material for students. In collaboration with Radhanath Roy, he also published the *Kabitāvali* (a collection of poems) during this time. Both the books provided model study materials in prose and poetry. With a view to creating opportunity for creative and informative writings in Oriya, Madhusudan started a journal called *Utkala Darpana* in which, among other things, were published parts of his own translation of Kalidas's *Raghuvanśam* (*Ayodhyā Pratyāvartana*—return to Ayodhya) and Radhanath's translation of the *Meghadootam*. Incidentally, during this time, translations from Sanskrit and English writings were considered good enough literature. But Fakir Mohan proved it wrong by writing memorable, landmark novels and stories in simple and colloquial Oriya. Despite his flair for chaste and high flown language, Madhusudan decided to write text books in simple Oriya which was largely the result of prolonged arguments with and towering influence of Fakir Mohan. The result was the afore-mentioned books on prose and poetry. Of course the paradigm of simple and educative language is his *Varnabodha*, the first of its kind in Oriya and admittedly the best and most effective teaching material for little children who are beginning to learn alphabets and words. His *Chhāndamālā* (*MG*,

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pp. 5–32), which contains poems like "Stava" (prayer), "Janani" (mother), "Janmabhumi" (motherland), "Nadiprati" (ode to the river) and "Prithiviprati" (ode to the earth) etc., was meant to inculcate religious and moral sense, good conduct and patriotism in the minds and hearts of the students and readers. An extraordinary amalgam of the lofty ideas of religion and morality on the one hand and pragmatic and practical teaching ability on the other, Madhusudan well-deservedly occupied prestigious teaching positions like the additional teacher and, later, the second teacher in Ravenshaw Collegiate School at Cuttack and, eventually, the coveted post of headmaster of this prestigious high school of Orissa—he had the distinction of being the first Oriya headmaster of this school.

As a trainer of teachers, Madhusudan believed that not only should the students be taught well, the teachers must be trained properly. That is why, during his tenure as Deputy Inspector of Schools in Cuttack district in 1880, he organized teachers' conferences for training them from time to time, and published a journal called *Śikṣā Bandhu* and wrote a book titled *Avadhāna Bandhu*, which were meant to train the teachers in the best and most effective manner. Besides these, he also wrote several other books which were used as text books and study materials for students and teachers. During his Balasore days, he set up a training school called *Avadhān Vibhāga*. Thus, his teaching profession was not meant for earning money and occupying positions, but primarily to spread education and improve its quality. No wonder, positions and prestige pursued him. He became the Inspector of Schools in Orissa in 1906 and was enrolled into the Indian Education Service in 1908. However, the position which he best enjoyed and which best suited his temperament was his appointment as the Headmaster of Cuttack Training School in 1893—a position he held for the next 12 years. As the best momento of his commitment and dedication to the cause of education, we have the Bhakta Madhu Vidyapitha of Cuttack which is the new name given after him to the Victoria High School he had established.

After a long, active and eventful career, Madhusudan retired from active service in 1908. Four years later, he died on the 28 January

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1912, on *Sri Panchami*, the day this great genius had come to the world fifty nine years ago.

Philosophy in Literature

As already indicated, Madhusudan's philosophy, as reflected in his poems and verses, is a robust optimism called *ānandavāda*, which issues out of his pure belief in God and divinity. He sees divinity and the divine hand in everything, almost in the same spirit as the proponents of the causal argument do for the existence of God, and expressed the optimism that human life is bound to be blissful since this world, being the creation of God, is the best of all possible worlds. This optimism comes out eloquently in his *Kusumānjali* where he sings *Madhumaya srusti, sudhāmaya srusti, é srusti amrutamaya hé.* (*MG*, p. 160). Unlike some Western writers like Shelley and Shakespeare, and even unlike his compatriot and preceptor, *Kabibara* Radhanath Roy, who only mourn over the extent to which human society and individuals stoop low in morality, Madhusudan marveled at the prospect of the extent to which man can rise in spirituality and divine heights. For while the former group of poets sadly stated how the world *is*, the latter strove to show and project how it *ought to be.* In this respect, Madhusudan was a revisionary metaphysician, not content with the actual structure of things, but passionately pursuing a better structure. Like William Wordswoth, Madhusudan always wanted to see the brighter side of life and nature. And in the spirit of William James, it was a strong "will to believe" that enabled him not only to believe in God and see the hand of God in everything that exists and occurs, but also to expect the best of things to happen to make this world a place worth living in and to make man's life full of bliss or *ānanda.*

Several times it has happened in the history of philosophy that, considering the state of things as they are, pessimistic and skeptical conclusions are sought to be drawn about the nature of reality and possibility of knowledge thereof. Take F.H. Bradley or Acharya Sankara for example. Both started with the analysis of experience or rather what in contemporary idioms is called the 'argument of

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illusion', and ended up with the conclusion that the world of sense experience is unreal and a mere appearance. If senses sometimes deceive us, said Descartes, what guarantee is there that they do not do so always? Bradley gave it a special logical twist: All our knowledge of the world of sense is bound to be conveyed and expressed in the form of judgements or in ordinary discursive thinking; the judgement or thought *relates* the subject and the predicate, the existence and the content, the 'that' and the 'what', of reality. And since relation implies distinction, the existence and the content, which are the inseparable, though distinguishable, aspects of reality, are treated as separate by thought, whereby the original unity of reality is distorted; and after having done this damage to reality, thought tries to reunite the inseparable aspects of reality *somehow*. But this "reunion", says Bradley, "is only a makeshift, a device, a mere practical compromise",[1] And so he is led to the (skeptical) conclusion that "... (O)rdinary discursive thinking—anything that moves by the machinery terms and relations—can give us appearance—not truth".[2] Thus for the intellectualists like Bradley and Sankara, our belief in knowledge, truth and reality are suspect and only provisional, if not absolutely unfounded. But, by an interesting contrast, William James, being driven by a strong 'will to believe', draws us to an altogether different—indeed the opposite—conclusion from the very same premise. For according to him, from the fact that there can be no truth that is absolute and there can be no knowledge that is absolutely certain, it does not follow that no knowledge is possible and nothing can be true and real. Truth is what works[3], said William James, and most of the statements of facts are true because they work in most situations and guide us in our actions in determining our future course of actions. We believe them to be true, as we must, in order not to cry a halt to the course of life and the world. Indeed, we make our own truth as much as we make our own reality, said James.[4] The will to believe was the life force of James' philosophy of pragmatism. And it is this will to believe in the goodness of God that made Madhusudan an uncompromising optimist and kept him away from pessimism and the philosophy of despair, to which many Western writers (philosophers and poets alike) have

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fallen victims. Even while depicting nature in poems addressed to children, Madhusudan sees the hand of God in everything. Here are some instances: "*Prabhāta*" (morning):[5]

É kalé bālaké jāgi ānandaré
Sumari hrudayé jagata ishwaré
Tānkari kruparu pāila prabhāta
Bhakti bharé tānku kara pranipāta
(At this time i.e., early in the mornng, children get up with the thoughts of God in their hearts; the poet asks them to bow to Him since the blissful morning is His gift of kindness to them.)

"*Sandhyā*" (evening):[6]

"*Dina anté rāti āsé tāhānka vidhané*
Sumara sé vidhātānku āhé shishumané"
(It is because of His grace that night comes after day, (so) remember that Creator, Oh children!)

Madhusudan, a *ṛṣī* by temperament and a teacher by inclination and profession, always wanted to see the glory of God in all creation and the brighter side of things which are created by God. And the teacher in him was eager to instil this sense of optimism in the minds of the children. The following are some examples:

"*Grisma*" (summer):[7]

"*Nidāgha samaya héléhén dāruṇa*
Até jagatara mitra
Janamāin megha sādhe prānihita
Vidhi vidhāna vichitra!"
(Though summer is painful and unkind, it is still a friend of the world, (for) it does a lot of good to the living beings by causing rain. This is the marvel of God's laws!)

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"*Padma*" (the lotus):[8]

"Madhumaya pabitra jāhā viswaré
Tó nāmasangé mishā vidhātā baré
Pankaja atu tuhi tenu bharasā
To pari shubhra hébi labhi sudashā"
(Oh, lotus! Because of God's grace your name is associated with whatever is good and pious. And since you are born from out of mud, I am hopeful that I shall be clear and pure like you (despite my association with the evils of the world).

In his famous poem "*Naba Basanta Bhāvanā*" (thoughts at the advent of the spring season), optimism is dished out to us through elevated and profound recipes:

"Āshā pārijata phutiba
hruda nandana vané
Jñāna-bhakti-karma sourabha
vyāpi jiba jivané"[9]
(The sky lotus of hope will blossom in the divine garden of our hearts. And life will be filled with the fragrance of *jñāna, bhakti* and *karma.*)

This is optimism rich with profound philosophical musings.

It has been said that Indian philosophy is initially pessimistic but finally optimistic. This has been truly reflected in Madhusudan's writings which appear to be pessimistic while drawing attention to the uncertainty and sorrowfulness of life, but this is really intended to show us the way out by pursuit of the path of morality and immortality (*amṛtatva*). Consider his approach to life in "*Jivana Cintā*" (*Madhusudan Granthavali*, pp. 126–31). When he draws attention to the suffering, miseries and uncertainty of life, one gets saddened and disinterested in life; but this mood lifts soon, and the reader is invited to an optimistic world of exalting prospects and possibilities. We are asked not to lose heart but to pursue the path of virtue and devotion in order to enjoy divine bliss:

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"Ré hrudaya na hua kātara
Samsārara vidambanā pāpa santāpa jātanā
Vipada durdina tama ghora bhayankara
Nirekhi, nirāshā bişé na hua jarjara
Dhara dhairjya ghenaré shāntvanā
Achhi sehi mahādhāma sé mahā sparsha ratana
Sé amruta mahausadhi, jāhāra kāmanā
Āshā jāgrata satata kare uddipanā
(*MG*, pp. 128–29)

Pritimaya jivana ratana
Débé toté paramesha, tānkari pabitrādesha
Nihswartha pabitra chitté kararé sādhana
Jagatara hita arthé diaré jivana"
(*MG*, p. 130)

(Oh my heart! Don't despair, let not the miseries and sins of the world overwhelm you with grief, nor should the bad days and adversities lead you to the poison of pessimism. Have patience and be consoled. (For) there is the divine world, the panacea for all evils, source of eternal hope and exciting possibilities .... The great God will bless you with the life of bliss. Obey His pious command with selfless devotion and dedicate your life for the good of the world.)

Two factors are to be noted here which figure prominently in the philosophy of Madhusudan. Firstly, Madhusudan provides a fitting parallel to Acharya Sankara's "*Mohamudgaram*", which aims at pointing to the evils of life on the one hand and suggesting the way to avoid them on the other:

"Mā kuru dhana jana jaubana garbam
Harati nimeshāt kālaḥ sarvam

Māyāmayamidamakhilam hitvā
Brahmapadam prabishasu viditva"

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(It is true that the world is illusory, not real and everything in it—relations, riches and properties, youth and all that—is instantly destroyed by time. The way out of all this is to realize and worship Brahman, the divine reality.)

The second thing that emerges out of Madhusudan's teachings is a deep sense of altruistic humanism, punctuated by the spirit of sacrifice and love for others, for the whole humanity—which form the basic elements of a virtuous life that can rid one of all miseries. This is evident in the last part of the last stanza of "*Jivana Cintā*" quoted above, i.e.:

"Nihswārthé pabitra chitté
kararé sādhana
Jagatara hita arthé
diaré jivana".

Striving for a good life for oneself, and working for liberation for oneself is normal moral conduct pursued by the average human. But as Sartre has emphasized, nothing can be better for us, individuals, if it is not better for all.[10] It is no wonder then that a few of us transcend beyond this egoistic moral ideal and work for the good of the world and liberation of the entire mankind, even at the cost of their own. This ideal of *sarvamokṣa* (liberation for all), which remains more an ideal and less an adopted way of life, was taken as the divine command by the *bhakta kavi* Madhusudan which was to be obeyed with selfless devotion and the spirit of self-sacrifice. Self-sacrifice and living for others constitute the root idea of Brahma Dharma, which was Madhusudan's chosen way of life. He passionately pleads for this altruistic humanism in the last part of "*Jivana Cintā*" where altruism is spontaneously blended with optimism regarding the state of things in human life. Reveling in spiritualism, altruistic humanism and the spirit of self-sacrifice in the interest of mankind has been a typical feature of Orissa's *bhakti* tradition. This is also evident in the touching declaration of another great poet-philosopher of Orissa, Bhima Bhoi,

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who wanted to sacrifice his life in hell in the interest of ridding the world of all the miseries and sufferings:

> *Prāninka ārata dukha apramita*
> *dekhu dekhu kebā sahu*
> *Mó jivana pachhé narké padithāu*
> *jagata uddhara pāu*[11]
> (Who can bear, I cannot, the massive suffering and sorrow of beings? Let my life rot in the hell, but let the world be redeemed.)

Unlike the traditional absolutists—both in the orient and in the occident—for whom the world is either appearance or unreal, Madhusudan is rather like the Buddha. In fact, as evident from the first section, he had great admiration and preference for the Buddhist philosophy—according to which though it is true that there is suffering in the world but there is cessation of suffering and there is a way to achieve this. The suffering doctrine, which is largely mistaken as Buddhism justifying detachment and even escapism, was only *one* of the "four noble truths" preached by the Buddha. The other three—i.e., there is a cause of suffering, there is cessation of suffering and there is a way to effect this cessation—were meant to engage us in the process of ending our suffering and living a blissful life bereft of suffering and the evils of life. Although the Buddha draws our attention to the fact that life is beset with suffering, he never preached escapism and universal renunciation, nor did he ask us to be indifferent to life's pleasures and comforts. He wanted his followers to know the root cause of suffering and uproot it. Conquer and defeat suffering, he said, but don't run away from it. For running away from suffering is running away from truth. And running away from truth is not only unfruitful, but unwarranted, unphilosophical, and irrational as well. We know of the Greek sceptic, Cratylus, who refrained from using language since according to him it inevitably involved committing errors and inaccuracies, and consequently he ended up in a street corner, not speaking to anybody and answering no questions, but simply wagging his fingers this way and that. It is

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said of a wise scholar of yore that at one point in his life, he resolved to be silent in seminars and discussions, and when asked for the reason behind his conspicuous silence, he replied, "*anṛtāt bhayam*"—i.e., he was afraid that if he spoke, he might say something false or inaccurate. This is not only irrational, but a poor parody of philosophical cautiousness. Buddha's teachings—which provide a paradigm of pragmatism and practical philosophy—showed a distinctive aversion for extremism and irrationalism. His philosophy of *madhyamārga* is the preferred mean between life-longing hedonism and life-negating asceticism. As a matter of fact, the doctrine that this world is full of suffering, that it is an illusion and that men should withdraw from it and look forward to the 'other world' in search of liberation did not figure anywhere in the Vedas or the *Bhagvadgītā* or the *Smṛtis*. Nor was this held up as an ideal in any of the basic Pali sources or the early Sanskrit sources of Buddhism.[12] If Buddha's teachings stand out as a distinctive face in the crowd for any good reason, it is for their philosophy of life-affirming positivism and abhorrence for transcendentalism and metaphysicalism. His *astānga mārga*, which emphasise the primacy of ethical and virtuous conduct as the philosophical ideal, was meant to show the way to live well and live a life free from suffering. If suffering is a fact of life, we are asked not to run away from it but to alleviate it as far as possible. This is precisely the philosophy of optimism which Madhusudan also adopted. Like the Buddha, he also told us to live well in the world so that our life is *madhumaya* (sweet, blissful) and *amṛutamaya* (full of the spirit of immortality and divinity), despite there being suffering and evils in it. And like the Buddha, he too taught that the way to good life is to live it in accordance with moral principles and good taste (*suruci*). And what could be more moral than living a virtuous life and working for the good of the world? As evident from his life and character outlined in the previous section, Madhusudan himself lived a life of exemplary morality and good taste and advised his students, readers and fellow humans to do likewise. This is also evident from his numerous didactic poems and verses meant for people of all ages—from innocent children to intellectual adults.

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Incidentally, I must emphasise two points of crucial philosophical significance that one finds interesting and impressive in Madhusudan's philosophy of divinity and morality. One is a general observation on religion and morality and how it bears upon the teachings of the *bhakta kavi*. The other is what I think to be a special feature of his belief in God and religion.

To take the general observation first, very few scholars in contemporary philosophical analysis will disagree with the premise that there is no logical connection between religion (belief in God) and morality. For there can be and have been great moralists who do not believe in God—atheism and moralism are not logically incompatible. Perhaps the most adroit exponent of this view in recent times is Rajendra Prasad[13] who proved this point quite convincingly. However, though religion and morality are distinct logically, a strong belief in God is likely to make a man moral, virtuous, altruistic and humanistic. To be sure, the logic of religious beliefs does not need an ontology, but its logic is surely guided by the fact that it ensures a virtuous way of life. The function of religious language is *regulative*; the idea of God and the belief in Him are meaningful, not because they are testable by evidences but because they are effective in regulating our conduct in the direction of a good life. As D.Z. Phillips has pointed out, the meaningfulness of religious language lies in our being able to see how the beliefs expressed therein are able to regulate and shape our moral conduct and social behaviour.[14] In shaping the course of our life it shapes our culture, social character and moral system. How it does this is tellingly indicated by Richard Swinburne: "... if there is a God, there is an obligation to worship, and also an obligation to treat others as God's children."[15] And what this tells us is that the belief in God would regulate our life in such a way as to lead to a perfectly cohesive and desirable social and moral life with an inspiration to live not merely for oneself but for others, the whole mankind. Madhusudan's writings have effectively shown this in as much as the burden of his poems and verses has been that the realization of divinity is closely associated with leading a moral, virtuous life; indeed, this has been recommended as the way to God and a good life. It is interesting

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that Madhusudan breaks away from the described asymmetry between religion and morality and reverses the principle of logical distinctness between them. Although I do not strictly agree with this (I defend the asymmetry elsewhere[16]), there can be no denying the fact that Madhusudan's view of divinity leading to morality and virtuous living has great philosophical profundity. For him life is greater than logic and literature and the latter has to be subservient to whatever best serves the purpose of life in order to make it worthy and meaningful. If Mathew Arnold has said that poetry is the critical reflection on life, Madhusudan proved it true by making his poems serious reflections on life, its meaning and its purpose. In fact, as we know from his life and character (previous section), Madhusudan was more a *ṛṣī* and *sādhak* than he was a poet. His poems therefore were predominantly the expression of his devotion, dedication and *sādhanā*. And since *bhakti* naturally leads to morality, Madhusudan's religiosity and devotion to God or Brahman (both meant the same to him, since the concept of Brahman is monistic and suits his strong belief in monotheism) is inevitably, though not logically, bound up with morality. That is why he makes his poetry the conveyer of *dharma* and preaches the message of morality and divinity in them. Morality for him, as we have seen, was the primary objective of religion. In holding this view, Madhusudan shows the logical acumen and insight we find in Ludwig Wittgenstein and D.Z. Phillips in as much as the purpose and function of religion (and belief in God) was taken by him to be regulative. It regulates our life in a moral way. The belief in God arguably makes us treat all men and women as the children of God—all men are brothers, as Gandhi used to say, and universal love and brotherhood becomes a better and more powerful means to victory than violent warfare. As is well known to historians, this precept is the typical strength of the peace-loving land of Orissa, also known as Kalinga, which had changed the invincible conqueror Ashoka radically into a passionate votary of *ahimsā* and an ardent lover of humanity. The otherwise important theory that religion and morality are logically distinct would therefore not interest Madhusudan for whom true religion is the way to morality and morality reveals the divine in man.

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Now coming to what I think to be special feature of Madhusudan's belief in God and religion, it can be said that his belief is special and noteworthy in the sense that it is different from the customary belief in God and religion. For while the official doctrine of theism is unqualified and unreflected belief in religion and God—perhaps some sort of conformism, ritualism and even dogmatism—Madhusudan's belief was clearly different. In fact he was a sort of a rebel and a non-conformist, strongly against ritualism and most other practices of Hindu religion. He displayed a typical abhorrence for conventional religion which had grossly distorted the true spirit of devotion and was rife with superstitions and spurious rituals. As a result of this distortion and misconception, religion that was meant to elevate and liberate ended up shackling its followers with bondage—bondage to bad faith that invariably stands in the way of the good life. The universal appeal of religion lost itself in the plurality of sectarianism. The malady has been creating global concern in modern times; through the garb of sectarianism, casteism and such other forms of stratification and also through the rise of fundamentalism and sectarian conflicts, it has been pushing mankind into a serious crisis—the crisis of faith and value. The sensible man who subjects himself to the conventional mores and practices of religion, to ritualism and institutionalization of religion, is forced to live a life of involuntary hypocrisy; for the sake of identity and security the sensible man wears the mask of a believer, but remains alien to the so called belief in his personal thoughts and convictions; deep within he remains a silent rebel, not bold enough to declare an open war. He is too weak to swallow the stories of heaven and hell, but much too indignant to believe them at the risk of irrationality and illogicality. These spurious practices of religion have done so much damage that man, who is a naturally religious animal, is tending nowadays to drift away from the ideals of religious life. The crisis is evident from the fact that the spirit of the modern times is dominantly secular, if not expressedly irreligious, and even suppressedly anti-religious. This crisis has become so explicit and so compelling that a recent author on religion has declared in despair: "... religion is on the way out... where religion is weak, one has the sure indication of

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a developed society."[17] Such desperate declaration of an apparent antithesis between religion and social progress is symptomatic of the modern man's dismay at the untoward happenings in the name of religion and religiosity. Largely because of these reasons, Madhusudan might have become a silent rebel and developed a critical attitude towards the undesirable practices of Hindu religion and accepted Brahma Dharma. This was naturally the reaction to and abhorrence for the practices of Hindu dharma. For he repeatedly stressed that man is *amrutar santān* (*amṛtasyā putrāḥ*) and hence there is no place for discrimination between man and man. It is this liberality and wide-mindedness of Hinduism *minus* its stratification, superstition and extreme religiosity which Madhusudan found in Brahma Dharma, much as Ambedkar found in Bouddha dharma. One of the questions that has been raised about Ambedkar's change of religion—and the same can be raised about Madhusudan too—is, why did he convert from one religion to another, if religion had such evil impacts? Why did he not remain a free man, independent of any religious limitations and constraints? The stock answer to this is that Ambedkar found Buddhism conducive to freedom of man and free from the shackles of ritualism, stratification and inequality that vitiated other religions like Hinduism. And the same can be said to be true for Madhusudan converting to Brahma Dharma. However, to me this is not the whole answer; indeed, this is not the correct answer. I would rather like to think that Ambedkar and Madhusudan did not convert from one religion to another nor did they become *different* as *religious beings*. They only gave up one religious practice in preference for another religious practice which they found to be better and more desirable, more humane. I have maintained that man is a *naturally* religious being and hence the choice before him is *not* between religion or no religion, but between good religion and bad religion, if we may put it like this. A bad religion would be that which is vitiated by bad faith and bad religious practices. And good religion, by contrast, is religion backed by or leading to morality and virtuous conduct and social behaviour. This was Madhusudan's preferred ideal of religion in which there is no discrimination and no inequality between man and man, between a *brahmin* and a *śudra*. For, as we shall

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shortly see, Madhusudan believed that, as the best of God's creation, man constitutes one great class and there can be no sense in speaking of gradations and stratification among men who are the children of God (*Brahma suta* or *amrtasya putrāḥ* as the Upanishads speak of them). It is only selfish interest and egotism which creates distinction and discriminations. What attracted Madhusudan towards Brahma Dharma is that it propagated destruction of selfishness as its pivotal feature. Madhusudan's passionate God-consciousness coupled with his apathy for religious orthodoxy found a happy home in the Brahma Dharma which believes in one God and one human race. As I have argued above, belief in God inevitably leads to equality of men. In an essay titled "*Bhāratiya Samāja*" (the Indian society), Madhusudan had argued against religious orthodoxy and in another essay titled "*Ananta: Āmara Ādarsha*" (the Absolute is our ideal), he passionately spoke of his intense longing for realizing the Absolute Brahman; this naturally led him to accept Brahma Dharma. One who realizes the Brahman recognizes the class of men as one large family and knows no discrimination among them. Intellectual upliftment, not parentage and birth, is the touchstone of greatness, and intellectual upliftment consists in *Brahma jñāna* or God-realisation, said Madhusudan. It is said that a Brahmin (*Brahmajñāni*) is known, not by his birth, but by his knowledge and righteousness. *Brahma jānāti iti Brāhmaṇa.* That is why Madhusudan says:

"Janāa mānava santāné
uccha kula tāhāra
Sé jé Brahma-suta, é bārtā
kara bhavé vistāra"
("Kusumanjali" in *MG*, p. 166)

Tell all men, and spread this message all over the world, that only the one who is the child of Brahma (by implication, *Brahmajñāni* or a virtuous person) is of a higher caste; man is the child of Brahma and hence is of the highest "caste" and there cannot be higher or lower within this "caste". He is the highest because he is the best of God's creation.

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And man is the best of God's creation because man alone is rational as well as spiritual and hence a moral being.[18] Indeed, it is the primacy of the ethical that makes a religion truly religious. For Madhusudan, as it was for William James, morality and virtuousity characterize the deep structure of religion as distinct from its surface structure which is vitiated by bad faith and undesirable practices and because of which great religions of the world have been at war against each other. That is why teaching morality and spreading the message of virtue was the central theme of his philosophy and literary works. In the interest of morality, Madhusudan did not care much about *creativity per se* in his writings, if they did not lead to moral teaching. That is why, many of his poems, written and intended as text book materials and meant to impart moral education, did not come upon the standard of good literature, though a selected few mentioned earlier, deserve to match literary works of world class. While comparing him with Radhanath Roy, Kalindi Charan Panigrahi has rightly remarked[19]:

> *"Rādhānath rasajña kavi, Madhusudan sādhaka;*
> *Madhusudan rasóttirna nitira nikiti dharti chālichhanti"*
> (While Radhanath was a *rasajña* poet who wrote verses with poetic excellence, Madhusudan was a *sādhak*, a saint who held on to the balance of morality that is beyond or above all *rasas*).

While poets are generally amoral, Madhusudan was strictly moral, even if it affected his poetic excellence. For the teacher in him got the better of the poet and was more dominant than the poet in his personality. The teacher was more anxious to propagate morality and virtue to generations of young ones and to guide the youth of this country in the most desirable way. With this objective in view, Madhusudan did not care much about creativity in his writings and stressed instead on the use of language that can educate and elevate. Unlike his preceptor, Radhanath Roy, who was admittedly a poet *par excellence*, Madhusudan's language is cultured rather than spontaneous, didactic rather than descriptive, value-loaded rather than romantic and emotional, more often prosaic even if expressed

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in poetry. While the poet's language, like that of Radhanath, is the offshoot of inspiration and experience, Madhusudan's language was the product of serious, brain-storming thoughts; while the former's language came from the heart the latter's came from the mind and the brain. Most of Madhusudan's poems and verses, meant as text book materials, were written with the expressed intention to *teach* and naturally sometimes failed to be appealing. Consequently, many of his poems generally failed to meet the standard of poetic excellence. But Madhusudan did not care and did not have any regrets about this. With an indomitable will to teach men to be moral and religious, he followed his logic wherever it led him to—like a profound, committed metaphysician. For example, while Radhanath describes the beauties of nature and beautiful princesses like Usha and Nandikeswari in his *kāvyas*, Madhusudan would try to show the glory of God in everything he wrote on. From the depiction of morning and evening, summer and rains and spring and of the river and the sky to the descent of the divine in the life of a saint and to the grand rise of the sun on mount Kanchanjanga, the *bhakta kavi* sings the glory of God and pleads for morality and divinity. Whereas poets in general, for the sake of poetic excellence, do not care much about morality—sometimes even depicting amorous relations between father and daughter and brother and sister—Madhusudan would never write anything that deviated from morality even to the minimal extent. As already said, his poems conveyed *dharma* and propagated morality. Even in the *Varnabodha*[20], which was meant to teach letters and words to beginners, one finds the moral teacher using carefully chosen words for teaching both language and morals. For example, while trying to teach the application of 'ya' the ("ଯ" sign in Oriya) the following verse was composed as illustration:

"Kuvakya kebhé na kahiba
Ālasya kebhé na kahiba
Mithyāku papa boli jāni
Kahiba sadā satya bāni"
(*Ibid.*, p. 697)

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Which means:

Never say bad words, never be idle; know that telling lies is in, (so) always speak the truth.

Also for teaching the application of "r" (the "ର୍" in Oriya), he wrote the following:

"Nirdaya karkasha kathā
mukhe na kahiba"
(*Ibid.*, p. 701)

Which means:

Never let unkind and rough words come to your lips.

These are only some of the examples of his painstaking way of teaching morality in his poems and verses, the language of which naturally becomes trying and not so natural and spontaneous. It is because of this that the poet in him remained less known despite his great works like "*Rishiprāné Devāvataraṇa*", "*Himāchalé Udaya Utsava*" and "*Jivana Cintā*" which are invaluable treasures of Oriya literature and in which he ascended to exceptional poetic heights. But undeniably, the teacher in his writings has remained and will remain venerable and inimitable. Madhusudan's innumerable poems, meant for readers of all ages, have taught us how we should live according to the models of virtue and divinity. His poems and essays have spread morality in this country and introduced good taste in literature by expressing lofty and profound ideas in a language that is highly cultured and product of exceptional brain-work. Because of this, he is well known as the initiator and spokesman of *suruchi* and *suniti*—good taste or decency and high morals—in Oriya literature. I have already said that while most others described the world as it *is*, Madhusudan preferred to picture the world as it *should be*; and in this he was uncompromising. Like the great idealist and moralist in Western philosophy, F.H. Bradley, Madhusudan strongly believed that if facts and principles come to conflict, so much the worse for the facts.

It is a pity that such a profound thinker - the author of "*Risiprāné Devāvataraṇa*" and "*Himāchalé Udaya Utsava*"—has not got recognition on a world stage; but that does not alter the fact that he

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had extraordinary talent in infusing his poems with profound thoughts and visions.

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12. K. Satchidananda Murty gives an excellent account of this in his *The Indian Spirit.* Andhra University Press, 1965. See esp. ch. I.
13. See his "God and Morality" in *Indian Philosophy To-day*, ed. N.K. Devaraja, Delhi, MacMillan.
14. "Religious Beliefs and Language Game" in B. Mitchell (ed) *Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 137–38.
15. *Faith and Reason.* Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1981. p. 142. By a fitting coincidence of ideas, we find this to be an important teaching of Brahma Dharma, Madhusudan's accepted religious ideal: There is one God and one mankind created by God. In order to understand the whole human society as one family, every individual has to be taken as one's brother or sister.
16. I have defended and argued for this asymmetry between religion and morality in my article "Prasad on God and Morality", Published in *Prajna*, Utkal University Journal of Philosophy, 1999.
17. D. Martin, *The Religious and the Secular.* London, 1969. pp. 9–10.
18. That man's morality follows logically from his essential rationality and spirituality has been argued in my recent article "Moral Personhood" *JICPR*, Vol. XXII, No. 1, March, 2005.

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L.K. Mahapatra

Orissa's Folk Culture

Conceptual Framework

Culture is the nodal concept in our present discourse. Most broadly put, culture is the man-made part of the world of the total environment of man. Man has to adapt himself to his own creation, culture, as also to the other part of the world. He cannot avoid this imperative.

Culture and civilization had been used interchangeably in the mid-19th century by E.B. Tylor acknowledged to be the father of anthropology. His famous definition was "Culture or Civilization is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." UNESCO had convened the World Conference on Cultural Policies in 1982, where 126 member states adopted a new and broader concept of culture, which almost coincided with the above anthropological definition of culture, and which went beyond the earlier concept restricted to education, science and the arts. (*cf.* Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO, 1985). However, mid-twentieth century anthropologists, such as, Robert Redfield and his associates, built upon the archaeologist Gordon Childe's differentiation of culture and civilization. While even the primitive peoples, as a matter of fact, all human groups since their emergence, had culture as the *sine qua non* and absolute marker of 'human status', 'civilization' was conceived as a latecomer on the human scene—barely 7000 years

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back or so. Civilization was characterized by certain basic, universal features: the great increase in the size of human settlement; central accumulation of capital through institution of tribute or taxation; monumental public works, such as palaces, temples etc., the art of writing; the beginning of such exact and predictive sciences like arithmetic, geometry and astronomy; developed economic institutions with expanded foreign trade; full-time technical specialists, with complex division of labour; a privileged ruling class; and the state, or the organization of society on the basis of residence or on the basis of kinship. (*cf.* Childe, 1950). Civilization is thus visualized as the antithesis of primitive society, designated as 'folk society' by Redfield, which consisted of very small, isolated, homogeneous and self-sufficient little communities, with simple division of labour based on age and sex, personal relationships connecting men and familial or kinship ties, not based on political affiliation or contract. Under civilization, thinking became reflective and systematic, led by the reflective literati.

In the primary phase of urbanization during the emergence of civilization, as hypothesized by Redfield and Singer (1954, excerpts in Teodor Shanin (ed.) 1971), "a pre-civilized folk society is transformed by urbanization into a peasant society and correlated urban center. It is primary in the sense that the peoples making up the pre-civilized folk more or less share a common culture which remains the matrix too for the peasant and urban cultures which develop from it in the course of urbanization. Such a development, occurring slowly in communities not radically disturbed, tends to produce a 'sacred culture' which is gradually transmuted by the literati of the cities into a 'Great Tradition'. Primary urbanization thus takes place almost entirely within the framework of a core culture that develops, as the local cultures become urbanized and transformed, into an indigenous civilization. This core culture dominates the civilization despite occasional intrusions of foreign peoples and cultures (Shanin: 344)..." When a folk society, pre-civilized, peasant or partly urbanized, is further urbanized by contact with peoples of widely different cultures from that of its own members, the secondary pattern of urbanization occcurs. "This

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secondary pattern produces not only a new form of urban life in some part in conflict with local folk cultures but also new social types in both city and country. In the city appear 'marginal' and 'cosmopolitan' men and an 'intelligentsia'; in the country various types of marginal folk: enclaved, minority, imperialized, transplanted, remade, quasifolk, etc., depending on the kind of relation to the urban center." (*ibid.*, 345). The integration of the city and the country, which is rather effortless in the primary phase of urbanization, cannot rest on a basic common cultural consciousness or a common culture, for there is none. It will rest primarily on the mutuality of interests, the 'symbiotic' relations or other mechanisms of rapprochement. (*cf. ibid.*, 356).

Within the civilization there was the great tradition of the written sacred texts, which was articulated, refined, systematized and mediated by the learned priests and literati. This great tradition is contrasted with little traditions which were specifically localized in primitive little communities beyond the pale of civilization. However, when the primitive or folk became part of the civilization process, these little traditions and their cultural components provided the building materials out of which the great tradition was shaped and systematized. In other words, an indigenous civilization is one whose great tradition originates by a "universalization" or a carrying forward of materials which are present in the little traditions which it encompasses. (*cf.* Redfield and Singer, 1954).

The transformed primitive peoples around the city but within the range of the expanding civilization are the peoples who were made half-converts to the city way of life, who provided taxes or tributes, and food surpluses or surplus labour for state or city. These became the peasants within the sphere of civilization. The peasants are adjusted to city or civilizational trappings, including the written word, the higher gods, temples, priests, technical specialists, artists and entertainers etc. The peasants are in a half-way house between the urban and primitive communities, the latter equated with folk society beyond the pale of urban communities and civilization. (*cf.* Redfield, 1961).

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Foster (1953) finds that the peasants, historically speaking, have grown up in a symbiotic, spatial-temporal relationship with the more complex components of their greater society, i.e., the pre-industrial market and administrative city. This subordinate relationship produces political, cultural and often religious dependence as well.

Redfield highlights another important dimension of the moral community that the pre-civilized primitive community, the peasant community and the city exhibited. He distinguishes between the moral order and the technical order. In the pre-civilized world of homogeneous little communities, the moral order was predominant and the technical order was rather sparsely developed. While moral order is based on what is peculiarly human—sentiments, we-feeling, morality and conscience, the technical order results from mutual usefulness, from deliberate coercion, bonds of necessity or expediency or from the mere utilization of the same means. In the technical order, men are bound by things or are themselves things, whereas in the moral order, men are bound by bonds among men. Under the urban condition the technical order is vastly expanded in range and multiple varieties; but though "the moral orders suffer, new states of mind are developed by which the moral order undergoes transformation". Then, "there is a double tendency within the moral order. On the one hand, the old moral orders are shaken, perhaps destroyed. On the other, there is a rebuilding of moral orders on new levels." Public or state-managed moral orders with speculative thinkers now become 'self-generative'; creation of a new moral order goes hand in hand with the development of the technical order. The moral community is expanded to include the diverse peoples, cultures and even moral systems under the state and civilization. In the peasant style of life, there is a 'balanced adjustment' between moral order and technical order. The peasantry has a system of values which is consistent, in the main, with those of the city people, with the market and the state, (*cf.* Redfield, 1961).

Other anthropologists and social scientists have, however, questioned Redfield's synonymity of "folk and "primitive" categories. Writing on the folk culture, G.M. Foster takes it to be part and parcel

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of the civilization and the state, whereas the culture of the tribe is self-contained and complete in itself, (*cf.* Foster, 1953). Foster even goes further when he says, "a folk culture may be thought of as a common way of life which characterizes some or all of the people of many villiages, towns and cities within a given area." (1953: 170). Allan Dundes views the term 'folk' as referring to "any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is—it could be a common occupation, language or religion—but what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own..." (1965: 2).

Hence, for purpose of the present paper, we shall adhere to the definition of peasant culture as also folk culture as a part-culture and the folk society as a part-society of the great society and civilization in which these concepts inhere, following the light of characterization of peasant culture and society by Alfred Kroeber. (*cf.* 1948: 284).

As to the issue of folklore forming the major identifiable contents of this folk culture, we may adopt Professor Bascom's conceptualization: "Folklore, to the anthropologists, is a part of culture but not the whole of culture. It includes myths, legends, tales, proverbs, riddles, the texts of ballads and other songs, and other forms of lesser importance, but not folk art, folk dance, folk music, folk costume, folk medicine, folk custom, or folk belief, all of these are unquestionably worthy of study, whether in literate or non-literate societies. All folklore is orally transmitted, but not all that is orally transmitted is folklore." (Bascom, 1965). However, folk music drama, folk dance, fairs and festivals, folk entertainments, folk religion and magic, as also folk customs and traditions, will be considered here a part of our study of folk culture. "The folk in this context always refers to the mass of ordinary people, largely illiterate and inarticulate, having traditional ideas, beliefs, customs, rituals and practices which are not systematized or coherently organized. Therefore, contradictions among them are evident. This does not mean that the written culture or the wisdom of the books is not reflected in, or mediated through folklore. In other words, folklore

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itself is a product of the interplay between the written culture and the locally or regionally prevalent indigenous culture." (Das and Mahapatra, 1993: vii–viii, 130).

Civilization in India and Orissa

It is common knowledge that there was civilization in India by the time the Aryan hordes reached here. There was an indigenous 'primary' civilization, viz., the Indus Valley Civilization, which flourished about five thousand years ago. If we remember that the civilization in Vedic times was quite different from what followed in the days of the *Purānas*, we could hardly question the fact, that the Hindu civilization of India was the end product of a long-standing process of indigenous development. The ancient civilization of India was a product of indigenous component, as well as borrowed strands, elements and institutions from other countries like, Iran, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece etc. We need not go into details here. We may just refer to the most colourful combination of diverse peoples and cultures brought into the vortex of the *Mahabharata* for fighting or for some common causes and values. This vast drawing together of the Aryan, Dravidian and numerous tribal resources in men, materials, technology and knowledge, was symbolic of the process of building up of the Indian civilization. The tribal contribution and components were not the mean or the least part of the great Indian civilization. The Nishada, Dasa, Dasyu, Kirata, the pre-Aryan *Janas* (*cf.* Ray, 1972), the autochthonous people of India, who could be easily taken as the still unassimilated tribal peoples of India, constituted the substantial population of India.

We are not surprised, therefore, to find cultural and racial continuities in India as basic features from the days of the Indus Valley Civilization. Think of the cow worship, tree worship, mother goddess worship and Pashupati cult, Yoga and even the *linga* or phallus worship, which are traced by most scholars to have originated and spread from the Indus Valley Civilization centres. The gap between the cow-eating tribes and the cow-worshipping tribes of

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ancient texts and in present-day India, is not in any way lesser than the cultural hiatus between the cow-sacrificing civilization of the Vedas and the cow-worshipping and horse-meat avoiding civilization of the *Purānas*.

The marriage of cross-cousins in Western Orissa, which is an anathema in the rules governing eligibility in marriage among the Aryans, as also in *Dharmashastras*, is popular there. It is most probably due to the political and numerical dominance of the Gond tribal chiefdoms in those regions. Kamakhya, the famous centre of Shakta cult near Guwahati (Assam), is reputedly a Khasi tribal goddess and cult centre. To this day many gods like Sri Jagannatha of Puri, Sri Lingaraja of Bhubaneswar and Sri Nursinghaswamy of Simhachalam are acknowledged to be of Savara tribal origin. Almost everywhere in Orissa, Shiva phallus has been worshipped by tribal or lower caste priests since time immemorial. It goes to the credit of Indian civilization that diverse gods and goddesses, rituals, religions, customs and social institutions, whether within or outside the *varna*-caste system, were not suppressed, even if these were often looked down upon as un-Aryan.

Hutton, the famous author of *Caste in India* (1961) veteran anthropologist and former Census Commissioner of India, was so overwhelmed with these facts that he drew many parallels between popular Hinduism and tribal religions. The animal sacrifices, votive offerings, spirit possession, worship of animals, plants and other objects, the anthropomorphic nature of gods and spirits, magical beliefs and practices, etc., are only a few examples of the basic similarities between the two. The tribal derivation can be easily documented by taking a census of regional gods and goddesses in villages and towns of Orissa, where the priests are traditionally the local tribesmen. And these gods, goddesses, and the fasts and festivals in their honour, are as much important for the so-called non-tribals as for the tribals in the region.

As a sequel to such perspectives of the process leading to the emergence and development of civilizations of the world and by drawing parallels between the Hindu society and culture at the village and the regional levels, anthropologists have come to the view that

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most of the tribal cultures found in India have been involved and used in the process of building up the great mosaic, the variegated fabric of civilization in India. In fact, some like Hutton, go to the extreme of holding them up as the residues of culture building materials, which were not absorbed, systematized or refashioned in the civilizational process in India. To put it fragrantly, the tribal cultures of India till the other day, were rather like the essence yielding plants, from which the cultural essence had been extracted to fill the pool of civilization of India. In other words, the tribal cultures in India and the Indian civilization had been derived from the same stuff, though dressed and served differently. This view is inescapable, if we rightly emphasize the indigenousness, the Indian-ness of our civilization. To give you one example, tribal music of Barabhum area in West Bengal has been shown by Purnima Sinha to be directly ancestral to some *raga/ragini* of the classical North Indian style. That is, there is sometimes a continuum from the tribal music through folk music to classical music. Similarly, court level *chhow* dance traditions in Mayurbhanj and Seraikela princedoms have been found by Nagendra Nath Mohapatra to be based on the *chhow* at the village level among tribesmen and on a little more sophisticated *chhow* at the regional level. There, unfolds the process of the growth of a classical tradition of *chhow* during the last two hundred years or so (*cf.* Mohapatra, N.K. and Mahapatra, L.K., 2003).

This civilizational process is however, not a one-way traffic. There is what is known as a feedback process. The tribal cultures, out of which the civilization emerged and grew, were in turn influenced and changed by their own end-product, the civilization. This resulted in the induction of the concept of reincarnation, which itself was a ratification of the widely prevalent tribal concept of transmigration of souls, the concepts of *pāpa* and *punya* re-entered and replaced the naive moral values of punishment for wrongs committed against the gods and spirits. Tribal headmen were elevated to the status of chieftains and kings, and division of labour by age, sex and ethnic groups was transmuted to caste-like occupational structure, arranged in a hierarchy and concepts of purity and pollution and even of untouchability, infiltrate the tribal society. For example, the Saorā

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of Gajapati and Rayagada districts have developed caste-like endogamous groups with occupational specialization in blacksmithy, weaving, basketry, brasswork etc. Similar caste-like specialized sections have been reported from among the Kondh in blacksmithy, pottery, basket-making-cum-weavinger (*cf.* Behura, 1997).

On the other hand, true to the spirit of secondary phase urbanization and expansion of civilization in Orissa region, especially in tribal areas, there was penetration of the intrusive culture of the Aryanized lowlands, giving rise to potential estrangement and conflicts with the local tribal peoples who 'owned' the territory and were dominant in all respects. This conflict situation was subdued or circumvented by the people intruding, from the plains adapting themselves to the tribal culture, customs, rituals, and language as also life rhythm. This process has been called 'tribalization' which occurred almost *pari passu* with the partial Hinduization of the Kondh and Saora themselves.

This rather cyclical process of give and take between the tribal cultures on the one hand and the ancient, yet growing civilization in India, on the other was a wide-spread phenomenon. For a large majority of the tribal peoples in India, except in the northeastern frontier regions, where the tribal groups in most cases were rather recent immigrants into Indian territory, the tribal heritage in the traditional Indian civilizations perhaps holds some mysterious charm of kinship and continuity, and this enables the friends to approach the mainstream of Indian society with some confidence and trust.

It is, therefore, no wonder that a large number of tribal groups in Orissa, whether speaking Dravidian or Munda family of languages, have replaced, in some of their sections, their tribal language in favour of Orissa's regional language, or have turned bilingual. (*cf.* Mahapatra, B.P., 1997). A few tribal groups in Orissa such as the Hill Kharia of Mayurbhanj, the Bathudi of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar or the Bhuiyan of northern districts do not know any other language besides Oriya since late nineteenth century or early decades of the twentieth century when they were first reported upon by administrators or anthropologists.

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When understood in this perspective, the process of transformation of Orissa's tribal cultures has proceeded far, in almost all cases, towards becoming folk cultures within the civilization. Except in remote interiors in Mayurbhanj Similipal hills, Keonjhar Juang Pirh, southeastern hills of Sundargarh district, some inaccessible regions in Phulbani-Kondhmal district, adjacent hill regions of Rayagada district, interior hill regions of Gajapati, Malkangiri and Koraput districts and in the outlying interior hill regions of Nawarangpur and Nawapara (Nuapara) districts, there are some very 'primitive tribal groups', who have mostly retained their tribal languages and many social institutions and cultural practices which align them more with the pre-civilized peoples without intimatic interaction with the state or market systems. Even then there are exceptions in this interior hill areas; for the hill Kharia of Similipal hills, a 'primitive tribal group', do not know any language other than Oriya and have the tradition of having their princedom and hill forts. The hill Bhuiyan of Keonjhar and Sundargarh districts, who are identified as 'primitive tribal group', are very much part and parcel of the local state system and have been credited with political support for launching the princes in the respective princedoms. The Gond in many western and northern districts had their own chiefdoms and had progressed far towards Hinduization, so much so that all the priestly castes including Brahmans serve them. Similarly, the hill Bhuiyan as also other Bhuiyan groups are accorded high ritual status by the Hindu princes, mostly because of the dominant tribals' political support for state formation and polity management. Most of the tribal groups in Orissa have eschewed beef-eating, pig-rearing and other ritually defiling customs and institutions which have brought them closer to the locally dominant Hindu castes.

Little Traditions: Universalization and Parochialization

The little traditions of the rural society, of the assimilated or enclaved or acculturated tribal communities, or of the relatively homogeneous slum or '*basti*' population from Orissa or people from Orissa working

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in tea estates in Assam are examples of rural folk culture, transplanted or remade, outside Orissa. Such little Orissas, like little Bihars, have been reported in anthropological and sociological studies of these urban communities. The rituals, festivals, fasts and feasting and even games and sports etc., as are commonly practised in different regions of Orissa, are sought to be replicated in their new neighbourhoods. The Jagannath cult, though originally derived from the little traditions of worship by the Savara tribe, has been *sanskritized* by Brahman priests and the *rajas* at Puri, the pivotal seat of the Lord; but it has also undergone *universalization* by being elevated to the supreme godhead of the Hindu religionists as a whole. Indeed, Jagannath has been identified as Vishnu, the supreme lord of the universe, in his penultimate *avatār* (incarnation), at least in the sacred lore of *Geetagovinda* of Jayadeva, who enhanced Vishnu's identity further as Lord Buddha, another *avatār*. While this is a process of *universalization*, the cult has undergone the process of parochialization too, as in western Orissa, where each village celebrates *ratha yātra* (car festival) of Lord Jagannath in its own ways in emulation of the world renowned car festival of the Lord at Puri. Similarly, if the supreme godheads of the holy Trinity—Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma, belong to the great tradition, their worship has been parochialized in the little traditions for the last two hundred years or so in Orissa by holding *Trinath mela* on the roadside or under a tree or any convenient place where even the Indian hemp (*gānjā*) is offered to gods and shared among the devotees to the accompaniment of bhajan recitals with the *khanjani* (tambourine) instrument.

It is necessary here to briefly introduce these two concepts. Universalization is the process of carrying forward of materials already present in little traditions by identifying and restructuring them with the sacred lore or gods of the great tradition of Hinduism. The downward spread and consequent transformation of great traditional rituals, gods or goddesses to be adapted to local festivals, rituals etc., is a process of *parochialization*. Mckim Marriott has very lucidly developed these concepts in his study of Kishan Garhi in an old cradle of Hindu civilization of Ganga-Jamuna Doab. He finds that

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both little communities and greater communities are mutually necessary conditions for each other's existence in their present forms. The great tradition has achieved, through the festivals, an integrated position in village life over about three thousand years of *sanskritization.* Even then, out of 270 festivals of the Hindu religious year in the list of Underhill, only eleven are observed here, and from Swami Sivananda's list of thirty-five all-India Hindu festivals, only nine are observed. However, behind Sanskritic names and great traditional rationales, the festivals of Kishan Garhi contain much ritual which has no evident connection with the great tradition (*cf.* 1961: 198–199). Again, the elements of the great tradition do not appear to have entered village festival custom "at the expense of" much that is or was little tradition. "Instead, we see evidence of accretion and of transmutation in form without apparent replacement and without rationalization of the accumulated and transformed elements." (1961: 201). However, the elements of both the great and the little traditions are regarded there as old and indigenous. (*cf. ibid.*). Mckim Marriott also finds another striking fact which highlights the differential absorption of great tradition elements like deities among castes. More than half of their deities are non- sanskritic, even though Kishan Garhi belongs to an original area of Brahman orthodoxy. Strangely, only forty-five percent of the deities worshipped by Brahmans are sanskritic, thirty-five percent of the deities worshipped by ten high castes below Brahman, and only fifteen and nineteen percent, of the deities worshipped by the low and the lowest castes respectively, are sanskritic deities. (*cf.* 1961: 215). However, he traces "in the careers of the little-traditional deities worshipped in Kishan Garhi ... the elaboration, the refinement and the systematization of the cults as such towards more universal cultic forms." (1961: 219).

Similar integration of little and great tradition elements is exemplified in Jagannath cult, which has evolved as the magnetic central cult of Orissa with all aspects of regional cultural development: literary, scholarly, sculpture, painting, culinary, architecture, music, dance, astrology, caste traditions, defensive institution (*ākharā*), other arts and crafts, and even political consolidation—

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all veering around this overwhelming presence in Orissa. The associated values of tribal heritage in this cult—the basic fraternity and equality of all men as devotees of the Lord, absence of commensal taboos among castes while partaking of the sanctified food offered to the Lord, the folk medicine administered to the god at the time of illness, and the divine directions in dreams, visions and miracles—are all integrated into the cult system. Here, the little traditions, associated with the Lord co-exist and are valued along with the elements of great tradition rituals and institutions introduced and mediated by the Brahman priests and the rajas from time to time.

The worship of the village goddesses, goddesses of virulent and epidemic diseases, deified ancestors of villages, the local spirits of hills, gorges, rivers etc., are all important centres of little traditions, whether there are shrines or not, whether these are placed in the forest, roadside or under a banyan or other sacred or even sinister-looking trees. Sometimes Buddhist, Jaina, Shakta or other cult gods and goddesses are worshipped as Hindu deities.

Villagers are often not unanimous as to their separate, sexual, sculptural or religious identities.

However, not all goddesses of the little tradition are identified with deities of the great tradition. The patron or protective goddesses of the princely dynasties either housed in the palaces or forts, are often derived from the little tradition of the localities, but these are most often universalized and sanskritized to be aspects or incarnations of great tradition mother goddesses, affiliated to Chandi or Durga. These demand animal sacrifices frequently, especially on some great traditional ritual occasions like Dasahara.

A very interesting and popular parochialization of the great tradition goddess, Lakshmi, wife of Vishnu, Lord Jagannath, has taken place in Orissa. Lakshmi does not discriminate between her devotees on the basis of caste or ritual purity. The untouchable caste, *Chandāla*, is especially abhorred in the Brahman society as despicable and one particular *Chandāluni*, who was a devout devotee of Lakshmi, and she was visiting and blessing her family. Lord Balabhadra, the elder brother of Lord Jagannath, who is identified with Shiva, wanted Lakshmi's

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brother to banish her because of her defilement through association with scavengers and other untouchable people. Ironically, Shiva in the great tradition has always come to the assistance of all his devotees irrespective of their caste.

Devotees undergo extreme physical austerities, often by piercing the tongue or other body parts, and walking over fire etc., for redeeming their pledges to the goddesses or gods when their wish is fulfilled. In such little traditional rituals, often shamanistic spirit possession is held. The Hindu villagers do not stop in this quest for wish fulfilment with only Hindu deities. Even Muslim *pirs* are revered and prayers and offerings are deposited at their sacred sites for fulfilment of wishes.

Animal sacrifices were common among tribal communities, to secure favour of the gods and spirits, for success in life, agriculture and family crises etc. Human sacrifice among the Kondh for higher fertility of crops was long since substituted by buffalo sacrifice or monkey sacrifice in some regions. But the deadly fear of becoming a victim for human sacrifice, even now perpetrated for all sorts of favours, including political success, and especially when there is any hurdle in completing a new construction: house, bridge, even temple, is so unnerving that in some interior parts of Orissa one may not be able to secure the services of someone to travel alone in unfrequented roads, forests or other such abandoned places.

Cultural Traditions in Orissa

H.K. Mahtab, prominent historian of Orissa had observed in 1991, "The shade of Aryan civilization is distinguishable in north India whereas in the south that of pre-Aryan Dravidian civilization is distinguishable. But Orissa is a region lying between the north and the south, the synthesis has been so complete that the shades of two civilizations are not distinguishable. Thus, Orissa is the epitome of India as its culture developed in course of centuries as a result of action ad reaction of pre-Aryan and Aryan civilization. At the initial stage when there was conflict between the two civilizations, there was a ban for the Aryans to come to Kalinga..." (1991: 2).

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The process of reconciliation between the Aryan and the pre-Aryan civilizations started when Buddhism and Jainism—the two reformist religions, became the mass religions of India. Orthodox Brahmanism received a serious jolt when the general masses turned towards the above two religions. Buddhism and Jainism spread to Orissa soon after their inception. There are copious references in Buddhist and Jaina literatures to Kalinga and Utkal." (*ibid.*).

Indeed, since prehistoric days the land of Orissa has been inhabited by various peoples. Stone Age remains have been discovered along the Burhabalanga, the Brahmani and the Mahanadi rivers and its tributaries like the Tel. Recently, prehistoric remains have also been found in the interior of western Orissa and in the river valleys and plateaus of southern Orissa. Although the prehistoric communities cannot be identified, it is well known that Orissa had been inhabited by tribes like the Saora or Sabar ("Suari" according to Pliny, the Roman historian from the Mahabharata days). To this day the Saora in the hills and the Sahara and Sabar of the plains continue to be an important tribe distributed almost all over Orissa. In the earlier centuries the proportion of the tribals to the general population in Orissa must have been much greater. As can be seen from successive censuses during the British rule, more and more tribal people returned to Hinduism and adopted Hindu manners, customs and rituals. A classic example of this penetration of Hindu influence may be given about the very primitive Bonda Parajas of Malkangiri district, whose women keep themselves tonsured right from their infancy. The explanation offered for this custom was Sita Devi's curse from the *Ramayana* days. And these Bonda Parajas have always been infamous as aggressive raiders in the hill abodes, and had therefore no intimate contact with the Hindus of the valleys around. The influence of Hindu society was not restricted to the fields of religion and customs. It extended to the formation of caste-like social and occupational differentiation on the lines of the local caste system.

In Orissa, which has been well known all over India since the days of Ashoka's Kalinga war, it must have been felt that the tribal component of the population would become overpowering if

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allowed to remain too long outside the Hindu fold. And this could not be tolerated because Orissa forms a continuous link with northern, eastern, southern and central India. In this context, it is not surprising suddenly to find Indradyumna, the legendary king of north India, with whom all the gods were pleased and who could go to *Brahmaloka* in his mortal body, coming to Orissa to elevate an unknown god of the local tribe—Savaras, to the status of a supreme deity of the Hindus of India. Similar might have been the attempt by some other king to elevate the local Shiva Linga, worshipped by the Savaras, to the status of a deity (lord Lingaraj) of all-India importance. It is also significant that the great anti-Buddhist saint, Shankaracharya is said to have visited Purushottama-Kshetra (Puri), one of the foremost sacred pilgrimage centres in the eighth century, and to have composed the famous Jagannathashtakam. A monastery (*math*) established by him was shifted to Puri in the ninth century where it assumed tremendous importance in the management of temple rituals (Mishra, 1971: 151–152). The Shaiva king Yayati Keshari, perhaps the same as Mahashivagupta Yayati II of south Koshala, the doyen of the Somavamshi emperors of Orissa, who is alleged to have built the Lord Jagannath temple at Puri and the Lord Lingaraj temple at Bhubaneswar, brought Veda-knowing Brahmans from north India, held a famous public horse sacrifice, and re-established Brahmanism in Orissa in the tenth century. As a result, he is popularly designated Indradyumna II. (Mishra, 1971: 30–32).

The resurrection of Brahmanism was aided by the process of "universalization" which, it appears, must have been a very ancient and recurrent process in the orthogenetic growth of Indian civilization. But this was especially imperative and expedient in the region known as Dandakaranya or Jharkhand, which was the hinterland of the Orissa coast, where the spread of the Jagannath cult in the interior came in handy for holding the caste services as ritual obligations that are sacred and inviolable. To aid this process, the rajas, many of whom were tribal in origin, founded numerous Brahman villages in their princedoms. No wonder, therefore, that "in the Protected States of India few chiefs have retained their position as the paramount caste authority to such an extent as the

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chief of the Feudatory States of Orissa, a tract long isolated and untouched by modernizing influences." (O'Malley, 1932: 64–65). Whether this speculation is valid or not, the fact remains that most of the numerous and powerful tribes inhabiting the northern, western and southern hills and plateaus, such as the Bhuiyan, the Bathudi, the Gond, the Binjhal or Binjhwar, large sections of the Kond and Savara, the Bhumia, and the Amanatya, have come to be more or less assimilated into the Hindu peasantry and are often considered equivalent in status to non-shudra castes. For once Elwin (1943) has been proved wrong, because Hinduization has not left the tribesmen in the dungeons of low menial status in Hindu society. F.G. Bailey finds a counter-process, later named as tribalization, of the warrior and other Hindu caste families who lived in immigrant Oriya villages surrounded by Kondh villages. The Oriyas mastered Kui tribal language and participated in Kondh rituals. "It is also clear from records and tradition that Oriyas were fully committed in the Kond ritual of Human sacrifice. Even today many rites in an Oriya village are in essence Kond rites." Even the Oriyas cultivate *swiddens* (shifting cultivation) to supplement their livelihood, as the Kondh did. (*cf.* Bailey, 1955: 119).

The Saora tribal group in Gajapati and adjacent Rayagada districts have Hinduized themselves in a special manner. In the Saora hills, there are at least seven grades of Hinduized Saora, called Sudha Sabar in self-designation: Jurei, Jara, Bhima, Jati, Sarda, Male and Sunapania, the last having travelled the farthest towards Hinduization and accorded the highest prestige. All the grades of Sudha Sabar emphasize their dissociation from the primitive Lanjia Saora and their superiority to both Lanjia Saora and the Christianized Saora. The last is even more despised as they are hobnobbing with the Christian Pan, the converted untouchable caste. Each of these seven grades of Sudha Sabar is endogamous and exclusive in commensal and connubial relations, and does not undertake swidden cultivation, which is indulged in by Lanjia Saora and is a low-status marker. They have abjured beef, pork and animal sacrifices, observe purity-pollution regimen of the local Hindus, cremate their dead, believe in hell and heaven and salvation (*moksha*)

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of Hindu theology. It seems the groups are in the process of tending towards caste-stratification and have more or less taken up other diacritical marks of castes. (Mohapatra, G., 1982–83: 189). They have innovated *Kula Mela* (community assembly), "similar to the caste councils of the local Hindus in their relations with the primitive groups of Saora and the deviants are fined and punished. The significant function of the *Kula Mela* is to keep records of their group principles and to add or to drop out the new or old principles standing in the way of upward social mobility in the region." (*ibid.*, 188). "The Sudha Sabara make an effort to integrate and identify themselves with the Hindu castes of the neighbouring society." (*ibid.*).

When we think of cultural heritage of Orissa, usually we conjure up in our mind the glorious past: monuments, memorable creations in arts, crafts, religion and literature etc. We have a lump in the throat, when we think of Utkal, the ancient land of excellence in the arts. But do we consciously include in these arts, the formidable archery, the intricate designs of nets and traps used in hunting, the engineering skill of the Saora terrace-making, the beautiful house-decoration of the Santal and Ho, the elegant and eloquent exhortation and ceremonial speeches of the tribals, or for that matter, the awe-inspiring hook-swinging or fire-walking as part of the Danda Nata cycle of rituals, or the *dhokra* brass work in the ancient cire perdue process, or the clever story-telling and legend-chanting by the bards, minstrels and genealogists of rural and tribal Orissa? I do not think that the ceremonial weeping or *kāndanā* of rural Orissa was included in our cultural heritage in the popular conception. Inherited 'glory' and 'benefit' are two elements prominent in the popular conception of cultural heritage. But 'glory' seems to overshadow, even eclipse, the element of 'benefit'. Otherwise, our custom of taking *pakhāl* (soaked rice), which is beneficial in many ways as well as nutritious and which must have sustained the stone workers and sculptors of Orissa in their back-breaking and mentally exhausting work in erecting the Konarks or Khichings of Orissa, should have come to our mind, the moment we talk of cultural heritage of Orissa. If we are told that there was a *pakhāl* tradition in

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Thailand, we may possibly believe it. But Orissa's folk culture has usually been devalued.

That Orissa's cultural heritage in our popular conception has been a 'class' phenomenon, is not difficult to discover. This cultural heritage of the 'Oriya', the high class Oriya, the Oriya claiming the so-called 'Aryan' derivation, is also an ethnic phenomenon. Of course, our present-day concern with 'cultural heritage' was not a part of our ancient cultural heritage. The concern for, and with, our classical cultural heritage was born along with our nationalistic revivalistic upsurge. Since independence, there has been a regional 'ethnic' revivalism. But this search for our ethnic 'roots', our 'sources' or 'foundations', has only very recently tried to encompass the folk, the ordinary, the humdrum, the tribal, the low class, and even the forgotten or obsolete traditions, customs and practices. In this process of unfolding of the concept of, and attitude towards, our cultural heritage, the contribution of foreign patrons and promoters like an American lady who resuscitated the dying art of *pattachitra,* cannot be over-estimated. Alongside this, the very concepts of 'culture' and *'sanskṛti'* have undergone a sea change.

In order to properly understand the cultural complexity in Orissa, we have to consider at least two types of socio-cultural units. First, we may consider the particular castes which have a traditionally ascribed occupation and an ascribed ritual and social status in a hierarchy of castes. Between themselves they insist on certain social distance, whether in terms of marital taboo or in food and drink taboos. There are also other types of taboos, like when approaching a person of higher rank or the manner in which one enters a house belonging to a man higher in rank. Besides the restrictions on accessibility to public facilities and institutions, like public tanks, wells, temples or centres of prayer and recitation of religious texts, there were other taboos on participation in village festivals also. In addition there was also a ban on certain modes of dress like footwear or turbans and on certain manners of sitting or movement (for example, ban on riding horses and elephants or on bullock carts while passing through the main street of a Brahman *shasan* village). Each caste practically had its own cultural world and social milieu,

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with its peculiar festivals and rituals, its own tutelary deities and sacred centres, its peculiar marriage, funeral and other customs, and its own level and limitations of social interaction with members of other castes and religious communities in the village society. In day-to-day life, people of various castes had to come into close contact with each other for achieving certain ends, like cultivation and harvesting, house building, fighting diseases in epidemics or meeting other daily or seasonal necessities. But these inter-caste relations were usually limited to social necessities. In other words, necessities of living together in the same area and occupational specialization in most of the castes had compelled them to depend on one another. Some cementing bonds were established through a peculiar social institution called ritual kinship and friendship (Mahapatra, 1968). Ritual friends, godfathers, godmothers, godbrothers or godsisters quite often cut across castes and ethnic groups and religious communities. This institution ensured a semblance of social interaction between the families of persons so related.

However, this interdependence did not ensure intimate social relationship for two main reasons. First, the so-called untouchables and most of the scheduled castes lived in their own sections or neighbourhoods away from the hamlets of major castes. This did not encourage children of various castes to mix, or to play together, or adult men and women of various castes to mix and gossip together. Secondly, there were the marriage and food related taboos restricting social intimacy. Only on occasions of certain comon festivals or certain village crises like epidemics or quarrels with other villagers, or on the visits of a roving *sanyasi*, or on the performance of folk operas, dances or other entertainment programmes, were there opportunities for the various castes participating in the same activities. Taboos on religious instruction, especially of the Vedas and *Purānas*, for most of the castes, and the rare opportunities to go to a village school, automatically restricted knowledge of the sacred texts and other books to the higher castes in the village. Even the minimal literacy was very rarely met with among the scheduled castes and tribes. These communities did not boast of literate persons, until

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the British administration opened schools for them and made them eligible to study in the common village school. An overwhelmingly large village population under these circumstances, continued to be illiterate for ages. The tribal communities had their own exclusive settlements in the hills and jungles. They were visited on rare occasions by officials of the state or some petty traders and at times by some Hindu *sanyasis* and in later years by Christian missionaries and contractors. When not living in the plains, or in the valleys, dominated by their non-tribal neighbours, the tribal communities led their almost autonomous cultural existence, and maintained their social exclusiveness.

The higher traditions of Hindu civilization, the epics, the sacred myths and the regional legends, never reached the majority of the population directly. The channels for spread of these myths and legends were various and were not restricted to the Brahman or higher caste agencies. The Brahmans usually recited the Bhagabata and other Puranas to the villagers through special institutions, like that of Bhagabat Tungi, a centre of recitation where villagers assembled in the evenings. Through the mechanisms of folk operas, folk dancing, folk singing of peripatetic entertainment troupes, the scheduled castes relayed in their own dialects and with their own emphasis what they had learnt orally and informally from others belonging to the higher castes. Therefore, the oral means of communication and tradition were not only strong, but were often the only means of participating in the civilization and cultural heritage of India. The oral traditions not only incorporated the bits of knowledge, wisdom and instruction from the sacred literatures, but also reinterpreted and synthesized these with the local tradition into a harmonious whole. Besides, this, the oral tradition transmitted from generation to generation the purely local stories, myths, legends and songs etc., which the anthropologists identify as the 'little tradition', distinguishing it from the 'great traditions' of the Vedas, epics, *Purānas* and other classical literatures. These facts should convince us about the crucial importance of oral tradition and folklore in the cultural life of the people of Orissa, not only in the past but also during the present century.

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Another facet of the cultural life of Orissa, which adds to the complexity and brings in another dimension of cultural differentiation is the regional differences within Orissa. Broadly speaking, we may think of four cultural regions within the present boundaries of Orissa. The north-eastern areas bordering on Bengal have; been influenced in dress, food habits, language, social customs and festivities by the Bengali culture and language. The southern parts of old Ganjam and Koraput districts have a sizable Telugu speaking population and have been influenced in language, food habits, dress and marriage customs by the Andhra culture and language. The western districts of Sambalpur, Deogarh, Baragarh, Jharsuguda, Bolangir, Sonepur, Kalahandi and Nawapara may be said in many ways to lie in a cultural and to some extent, linguistic continuum with the region of Chhattisgarh, earlier in Madhya Pradesh, just beyond the border, where many Oriya-speaking castes live even at present. The fourth region may be said to be the distinctive or typical, in both cultural institutions, social customs, and linguistic and literary sophistication. This region comprises roughly the coastal districts of Balasore, Bhadrakh, Kendrapara, Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Puri, Khurdha and Nayagarh and portions of adjoining districts. The remaining areas of the State extending from the northern (undivided) districts of Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj to the southern tribal areas of Kondhmal-Phulbani, Boudh, Ganjam, Gajapati and Koraput, Rayagada, Nawarangpur and Malkangiri districts, to a large extent, cannot be called more or less homogeneous cultural regions. The only common feature of these areas (except Ganjam, Boudh district in the south and southern parts of Keonjhar district) is that these are inhabited by tribals who account for more than fifty percent of the total population. Each of the tribal communities has its own language, whether Munda, Dravidian, or in several areas, the dialects of the regional language, Oriya. Each of them, again, has its own tribal religion, assimilating to a larger or smaller degree the local cults of Hinduism. Besides, in the pattern of dress, food habits, drinks, house, architecture, village organization and other social and economic characteristics, they differ from one another. As noted earlier some of the tribes,

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like the Kond and Saora have developed internal social differentiations along occupational specializations, as potters, weavers and basket makers. Some other tribes like the Bhuiyan, the Bathudi, the Gond and the Binjhal (Binjhawar) of northern and western Orissa, have been very much Hinduized and their status is equivalent to that of the clean Hindu castes from whom water is accepted by the Brahman.

The opening up of opportunities to migrate to the industrial areas of Calcutta and Jamshedpur or to Assam tea gardens and even to Burma in colonial days have diluted many tradition-anchored customs and institutions and broken many social and economic barriers. The hill Saora, Kondh, and even the hill Bonda have been affected in their cultural moorings through such work outside their habitat or even when jailed for criminal activities. Orissa has been predominantly a rural society, with barely 13.43% of its population (in 1991) living in towns of various categories. Its culture is overwhelmingly village-centred.

The cultural centerpiece in Orissa has been the Jagannath cult, the worship of the supreme deity of the Hindus at Puri, known as Shrikshetra for ritual/sacred purposes. It has become a cultural, religious and even secular/political base of the royal dynasties beginning with the Ganga dynasty in the eleventh century. Lord Jagannath, His associated gods and goddesses, local cults and the regional spread of his cult to almost all the feudatory princely states under the Orissa emperor, has imprinted upon the cultural and social life of Orissa since at least eleventh century. The association of the tribal people, Sabara along with their descendants Daitapati, in not only this all-pervasive Jagannath cult, but also in the Shaivite cult of the Lord Lingaraj of Bhubaneswar at Ekamrakshetra, gives the religious orientation of Orissa a distinctive character. Besides, in Vaishnava conceptualization Lord Jagannath has been equated with Lord Vishnu's divine reincarnation as the penultimate *avatāra*. It is probable that during the days of Kalinga war, this region was a great Buddhist base and this *avatāra*-ascription to the allegedly tribal Nilamadhaba stone deity of the Sabara in the vicinity of Puri, is therefore easily understandable. Lord Jagannath is also conceived as

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a Jaina godhead. Orissa has been the land of Shakti, Pashupata, Ganapati and Natha cults and the saints and mystics of various faiths, including Islam, have made this their abode. Orissa has also been a great centre of Sun worship, of which the Black Pagoda or Sun temple at Konark is a cultural monument of world fame.

Literature, varieties of food, sculpture, wall paintings, lacquer work, patta paintings, temple architecture, brass, applique work, wood work, music and dancing have centred around these religious cults, especially in relation to the Jagannath and associated cults. The nineteenth century Mahima cult of *Shunyavada*, in many ways a heterodox, anidonoic, anti-hierarchic, egalitarian cult, which professes against Brahmanic domination and animal sacrifices etc., has been thriving in Orissa as partly parallel and partly convergent to the Jagannath cult.

Cultural specialization had taken place in Orissa contributing to the diverse arts and crafts: cire perdue casting of images in iron or brass, artefacts of brass and bronze, pottery, appliqué work, puppetry, pattachitra painting and wall-painting (*jhoti*), body decoration (tattooing), horn work, masks, ivory work, wood work, silver and gold filigree and brass ornaments, exquisite textile weaving especially of *ikat* (tie-dying) special effect, lacquer work, bead work, etc., speak volumes about the age-old cultural heritage of Orissa. In a sense, only Kerala among Indian states can come upon Orissa's level in virtuousity in myriad arts and excellence. The classical Odissi dancing and varieties of folk music, folk dancing, folk opera and drama, Odissi music with infusion of south Indian, north Indian and tribal and indigenous folk raga and rhythms have enthralled audiences in India and abroad, and added substantially to our Indian repertoire. Evolving a unique Orissa school of architecture has been a great example of cultural innovation in medieval Orissa.

Fairs, festivals, fasting, vow-fulfilment penances and ritual tortures of the body are other dimensions of cultural expressions. The temple gods and goddesses of numerous locations have their own rituals and festivals, special ornaments and accoutrement (*vesha*), food offered to them etc. But usually the non-Brahman priests served them in tribal and rural areas.

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Gods and goddesses of various sects, cults and regions and even of ethnic groups may be differentiated into several levels. First there are the pan-Indian Vedic or Puranic gods and goddesses, about whom myths are found more or less in a uniform manner all over India. These gods and goddesses may be said to belong to what is known as a "Great Tradition" or scriptural tradition or to Sanskritic traditions. The second level is concerned with specific gods and goddesses, especially sacred to certain regions or local communities of a province, district or even a village. In the third level we have deities, who are sacred specifically to an occupational group or a caste group or to a tribal group. When we think of the myths about gods and goddesses belonging to the folk tradition, we invariably think of the last two levels in addition to those of the Sanskritic Gods and Goddesses, who had taken, as it were, local roots, and are reflected in the regional or local folklore.

The Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara or Shiva has taken an all-India form but sometimes it may have local variations. According to some Purānas, Brahma was cursed to undergo reincarnation as a goddess in Kaliyuga and was to be offered worship only in company with the other members of the trinity. We need not go into the elaborate and well-known myths about Lord Jagannath, whose ancient sacred temple at Puri goes back to the eighth century AD. The Vaishnava tradition, symbolized by the Jagannath cult in Orissa, has produced many myths at the folk level about Vishnu. We have, for example, Kshira-Chorā Gopinath (the beloved of *gopis* who stole milk) located at Remuna in Balasore district and Sakshigopal (Gopal, who bore witness) at a place of the same name in Puri district.

The trinity has again in recent years become very popular in the form of the cult of "*Trinath Mela*". This cult has spread all over Orissa and even beyond in less than a hundred years. Lord Shiva with or without his consort Parvati or Gouri has similarly entered into folk-level myths in Orissa. There are a number of religious observances (*Osha* and *Vrata*) followed mostly by women. These observances are supported by their relevant myths explaining their origin. Similar myths and associated religious observances are found centred around Lakshmi, Durga, Kali, Dharti (goddess Earth) etc.

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When we come to regional or local deities, we may consider the myths about the snake goddess, the village goddess like Mangala or other exclusively local gods and goddesses of the "state" cult (for example, goddess Danteshwari in Bastar, Samaleishwari of Sambalpur, Kantakuanri in Bonai, all of which were princely states).

At another level of differentiation, as noted above, we find some gods and goddesses of all-India or Sanskritic tradition adapted to the local context of the occupational or caste groups. For example, Vishwakarma is specifically sacred to the carpenters, smiths, masons, and in the present days, to the engineers. Similarly goddess Durga is specifically sacred to warriors and goddess Lakshmi almost exclusively to businessmen. But when goddess Lakshmi is regarded as the goddess of rice or fertility in general, she has basically the folk character in myths, almost restricted to the farmers. The agricultural caste of western Orissa, namely, the Kulta, has a specific caste-deity, presiding over the destiny and safeguarding the interests, of this particular caste. Similar caste deities of other castes are also known to have myths woven around them.

Each tribal community—even when it is almost wholly Hinduized like the Gond, the Binjhawar of western Orissa, the Bhatada and Omanatya of Koraput district, the Bhuiyan of Sundargarh district and some sections of the Kond, Sudha Saura or even some Juang in Dhenkanal district—has a largely distinctive set of gods and goddesses not derived from the Hindu pantheon. That the Hindu gods and goddesses and their myths are absorbed into the tribal deities and myths, is not strange at all. For, the tribal communities and their Hindu neighbours have co-existed for centuries and the tribal absorption of Hindu ways has been traditional and gradual.

Hierarchy of Folk Traditions

The great traditions or shastric traditions emanating from the Indian scriptures, deities, rituals, festivals and the Brahman literati are supposed to be applicable all over India with equal force among all sections of the Hindus. However, these are not manifest among all

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the seats equally; rather some scriptures which are specially sacred for the Shaivas, may not be at all relevant for Vaishnavas or Shaktas. Even when people belong to the same religious divide, some shastras better serve the Hindus of one region than those of another region. For example, for deciding on the caste-varna transgressions in marital and other matters, in Orissa region *Shukraniti* is mostly relied upon. Obviously, for regulating the moral and ritual conduct of the Brahman, the shastras cannot be the same for the fish and meat-eating Gouda Saraswata Brahman of western India or the fish-eating high class Brahman of Bengal, Assam, and Orissa or the strictly vegetarian north Indian or south Indian Brahman. Similarly, the nine categories of Brahmans of Orissa including the ploughman (*haluā*) Brahman or taro (*sāru*) cultivating (with hoe) *sāruā* Brahman, or *jhāduā* Brahman of western Orissa, would be governed by shastras or shastric regulations which may differ from group to group. The coastal aristocratic *samanta* or *shasani* Brahman, of course, would be following some shastras which may be claimed to be purer or higher or more ancient. Likewise, the Kishan Garhi Brahman many not worship all the shastric deities or observe all the Hindu festivals (*cf.* Marriott). This is just a sample, albeit selective, of the variations considered normal in Hindu sacred traditions. The shastric traditions could not have been rigid or inflexible in their spread to diverse cultural regions of India.

However, it may be said, that folk traditions by definition restricted to localities, little communities of peasants and other castes in various regions, must be highly diverse, even conflicting with one another, in the same caste over a wide area. Hence, we require a deeper understanding of the hierarchy of folk traditions to get some order out of this wild, almost unpredictable quagmire of variations.

At the outset, we have seen how we may conceive of regional (in the sense of culture regions of India: Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Maithili, Jharkhandi, Magadhi etc.) shastric traditions followed by the Brahman groups below the Great Tradition of Indian shastras, epics, *Purānas*, *Bhagavat Geeta* etc. Of course, there are regional variations of *Mahabharata* or *Ramayana* (e.g., *Sarala Das*

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Mahabharata or *Balaram Das Ramayana* of Orissa). Similarly, new *Purānas* are being composed in recent decades (for example, *Jagannatha Purāna* out of the materials from *Sanda Purāna* and other ancient *Purānas*, or *Ekamra Mahatmya* for Lord Kruttibas or Lingaraj godhead in Bhubaneswar (Ekamra Kshetra). These regional versions are usually innovative, often syncretistic, accretions from both Great Traditional classical sources and folk level 'little tradition' lore and events. When the shastras mention about *deśācāra*, they most often refer to this regional level of shastra-cum-folk *acāra* or traditions.

However, I have found a very potent, though not always codified or publicized, form of *deśācāra*. Let me illustrate this from personal experience. In 1951 at Calcutta University hostel, the Oriya *māli* (gardener) in the hostel refused to lift the dead body of one of the workers who died there. When I asked him whether the dead person belonged to a different caste, I was told that he belonged to the same caste, but he came from another *rājya* in Cuttack district. The problem was that there was no equivalence of moral traditions between members of the same caste between two neighbouring *deśas*, Ali and Kanika. We know the oft-quoted adage: *deśa deśke phānk, nai naike bānk*.(as there are bends in the river, one *deśa* differs from another). For all practical purposes, the same castes were not perceived as one, as they belonged to two different *deśas*. This taught me rather shockingly that not only there were differing caste traditions (about which as social anthropologist I knew), there were also princedom-wise diver-gences in their caste constellations. I took up, much later though, a research project on the role of the Hindu princes in the caste system of India. (*cf.* Mahapatra, 1984). The study revealed that each princedom, going back to some centuries, functioned as autonomous unit, not merely politically, but also economically, socially (in matters of caste regulations), juridically, morally, and above all, religiously and ritually. Hence, *deśācāra* at the princedom-level was the effective *deśācāra*, which none could flout with impunity.

The castes and tribes are known in anthropological literature as ethnic groups. Though the vedic term was *jana* for tribes, *loka*, (in

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vernacular *luka*) is applied to both tribes and castes in the villages of Orissa. The Kondh call themselves as *kuiluka*, the people speaking Kui language. Similarly. Dom luka, Chasa luka etc., are some other castes. Hence, caste customs, rituals, caste deities, regulations for moral conduct and punishment, proper taboos in food, drink and dress, marriage and divorce rules, relative hierarchy *vis-à-vis* other castes and protocol in public functions etc., peculiar to each caste may then be called *lokācāra* of folk traditions. These are very stringent folk traditions, as ostracism or outcasting of a person for breach of *deśācāra* or *lokācāra* was enforced, if necessary, with the threat of physical force by the prince.

The last category of folk traditions is relevant at the family level, and especially affects the newly inducted daughter-in-law from another *deśa* or even another micro-marriage-region (one marries in the same sub-caste within a micro-region). The *kulācāra* or the family traditions may sometimes override or occur side by side the *lokācāra* traditions. At the time of marriage, funeral, childbirth and other life cycle rituals like ear-piercing, haircutting etc., the traditions of the bridegroom's family, as distinct from those of the bride's parental family, hold good, and cannot be violated by the daughter-in-law. Very interestingly, certain steps or items in a particular ceremony or even a whole ceremony may be dropped, just because an ancestor had banned it or because some mishap befell the familly while observing certain customs or elements in the local tradition.

The above delineation of the differentiated levels of folk traditions must be seen to comprehend also the gods, goddesses, myths, rituals, *brata, ośā* (observed by women), fasting and other austerities for the sake of fertility, well-being and prosperity of husband, son, brother, the first-born (boy or girl) and unmarried girls. Folk law and morality, widow remarriage and childmarriage regulations, crime and punishment etc., also adhere to such differentiation.

We have seen in the section on Little Traditions, how the classic form of chhow dance was systematized and made sophisticated at the court level in Mayurbhanj and Seraikela; this had its base in the folk

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level little traditions among the tribes and villages, and in the intermediate level of the inter-village semi-feudal entities of the pargana, pirh or sardar. Similarly, in the evolution of Odissi classical dance of present day we may discern the four folk levels of *gotipuā* dance in Ganjam etc., or the higher level of *Mahari* tradition in the Jagannath and other temples where devadāsi system was introduced. This movement back and forth between the little traditions and classical Great Traditions have characterized the civilization process in Orissa. Therefore, the levels of folk culture have vindicated their *raison d'etre* again and again. The elevation of *pahāri* classical *rāga* from folk level as also the integration of Bhumij and other tribal music to classical level in Barabhum on the Bihar-Bengal border tell the same story.

Thus, it may be clear from a survey of regional folk literature, folk music, folk dance, folk drama, folk arts and crafts, folk myths, folk medicine, folk knowledge and folk science, etc., that our folk level culture has enriched and replenished the classical, shastric, sophisticated thesaurus to elevate the great civilization of India to the highest levels it has reached so far.

Folk World View

There are many near synonyms for the concept of world view (weltanschauung in German). These are: ethos, cognitive map, collective representations, ideology, belief and values etc. The most inclusive, of course, is culture, which, again, is a very wide term. However, 'cognitive map' preferred by Bailey (1966) consists of a set of value directives and existential propositions which together help to guide social interactions. Worldview in the conceptualization of Vaughan (1977) "implies that societies organize natural and supernatural phenomena into integrated, meaningful systems what might be called philosophic system." For him, a worldview is more accurately a matrix which channels and encompasses the totality of cultural experiences. To make it more precise in the same vein, Professor Surajit C. Sinha analyses it in terms of man's conceptualization of, and relations with nature,

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other men, and the supernatural phenomena. Further, it can be conceptualized on three planes: sensory, extrasensory and moral, as also in time dimension. However, this paper is not the place for such conceptural elaboration.

It goes without saying that what constitutes the folk worldview would be mostly reflecting the worldview of the rural peasants, for, they constitute the overwhelming majority of the rural mass in Orissa, and belong to Hindu religion. Apart from some field study in central Orissa and characterization of the Oriya peasants' 'cognitive map' as attempted by F.G. Bailey, we shall be guided by scholars who have studied the peasants in traditional cultures. The peasants, as conceived in Anthropology, are not restricted to landowner-cultivators, but may include agricultural labourers, service castes and artisans who subsist on agricultural production as way of life.

The peasants in Orissa lead a very harsh and strenuous life. For an urbanite, the village peasant life may have romantic associations. But the agriculturist has few moments when he is not burdened with tensions, frustrations or exertions. The moment the paddy plants put on blades, the peasant forgets about the home comforts and neglects his wife and children and immerses himself in pressing agricultural tasks till the plants "bear" the paddy grains. Then only he thinks of his family. When the paddy crop ripens, only then his wife dances with joy and there is general spirit of celebration. All the peasant's efforts, precautions, and exertions may not add up to much, if the imponderables go awry. Hence, the overall philosophy of life hinges on fatalism, which the proverb, dismissed below graphically capture.

His vision of the world, family and nature is all coloured by his view from the earth, the ecology of cultivation and vulnerable life. he knows from his earthy experience that if he cultivates over three years the same species of paddy in the same plot of land, the paddy becomes as unproductive as weed. Similarly, he also knows that in three generations, his family may be shorn of its reputation.

The folk wisdom in the villages reflects a hardy sense of mundane humour, born of stark realities. The proverb pithily conjures up the untenable substitutes: the adopted son is not to be equated with one's

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own, a length out of a tangled yarn cannot be found straight, a morsel of rice in a potful of *torani* (slightly fermented rice water kept overnight) is not to be equated with a full meal (or rice), and similarly, if there is a drizzle, it is not to be called adequate for ploughing the field. The same earthy humour moulds his view of his family size. As a single piece of fuel wood does not burn, a lone son does not play. It requires more than one child to have a family.

Though a peasant is a master in his village and has relatively high status, especially if he owns his own farmland, yet he is expected to lead a modest life. For, he knows the more he shows off, the greater will be the expectations by the village servants as also by the visiting officials. Moreover, he also knows that he is a mere subject and citizen, and he has to obey the orders of the raja (of Dhenkanal princely state in the pre-independence era) and his present-day political masters and administrators. So runs the proverb: leave your duties to the ancestors and serve the rulers.

The peasant's life style does not admit of ostentation and false airs. Hence, the folk humour wittily deprecates the following in a telling proverb: to express resentment when one takes food in another's house, to play at dice (a costly aristocratic game of chance), when one goes out begging, to flaunt an ironed white dress being a peasant, and to address the moneylender in a language unbecoming of his status—all this goes in vain.

It is not a surprise of find a plethora of folk sayings, folk evaluation, proverbs, folk songs and stories, beliefs and customs centring round, and even extolling the virtues of, agricultural life and activities. Above other vocations, agriculture is held high, as evident from a sample of Oriya proverbs current in Dhenkanal district: *cultivator sustains a lakh; whoever does not cultivate, does not have a fixed abode.* But the chores of cultivation take a heavy toll of social life in the busy reason. Hence, a busy cultivator cannnot attend to his wife's tantrum when the paddy plant grows and demands. When paddy ripens, everyone is happy, especially the cultivator's wife. For, if the cultivator neglects the agricultural chores and the right timing of an agricultural operation in terms of the weather, rainfall, soil condition and if the plant growth is not heeded to, he runs the risk of losing

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a good crop for a whole year! Compared to this, the proverbs point out that the merchant frequenting the weekly markets, loses only a week if he neglects his work. The cultivator does not understand the game of dice, which evidently is the game of the leisure class. If he neglects his agricultural work, he loses everything not only for one year, but cummulatively his poverty and his loss increase over the years. Cultivation does not brook delay or staggering of operations, whereas successful trading requires a little patient waiting for better profit—so goes a proverb. There is another proverb about a comparative evaluation of loss due to neglect. The cultivator loses one year, the agricultural labourer loses only one day (of wages), but the head of the household loses one generation through neglect of his work and responsibilities.

On the other hand, the cultivator, compared to more knowledgeable castes, is often the butt of rural jokes; for example, a cultivator is a rustic fellow; he does not know the qualities of camphor, he smells it and identifies it merely as rock salt—as he is unfamiliar with camphor and is an ignoramus! Again he does not know the delicious green coconut water, for he confuses it with the water of soaked rice which is his favourite and familiar food! But he is thrifty and very clever, like a field rat, which saves even a grain and stores it for the rainy day! His vocation is one, which does not require literacy, while trading is impossible without the trader being literate to keep accounts. Inspite of this low evaluation, because of his illiteracy, ignorance and simplicity, the cultivator is nonetheless valued as a friend, much as the processed arena nuts are useful in times of need. He is contrasted in the rural society with the fisherman, *Girigiria*, or the oilman or sweetmeat seller, who have to travel a lot, vend their wares in several markets or villages, or catch fish in streams or tanks in several villages; hence, they have "thirteen" (many) camps in twelve months, unlike the cultivator who is rooted in the village and is the mainstay of the village economy, rituals and cycle of life throughout the year, as the proverbs make it very clear.

However, as noted above, the lot of the cultivator is very onerous, harsh and he has to be industrious and patient beyond limit. He has to work outside in the hot sun, day in and day out, and has to suffer

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the heat like his bullocks, without protest. he requires manpower, mostly depending on his family members, as he cannot always get the services of outsiders as day labourers. Moreover, giving the land to tenants will not bring in much by way of harvest. Hence, a cultivator prepares his son(s) for agriculture. However, a trader has to mind his business himself, for a son may not be sufficiently clever or careful to run the business. The proverbs to this effect are further strengthened by another proverb, which clearly puts a great value on the cultivator's son as his father's assistant for successful farming.

However, cultivation as traditional occupation is identified as the proper work of the cultivator caste, *Chasa*, which is a fairly high status group in village society. If this cultivator caste owns a lot of land in a village, they may be considered a dominant caste, even if their population does form the majority in the village.

Talking mainly about the Oriyas, and their evaluation of other men, F.G. Bailey finds their perception of the social world in categories of rank. Relationships within a peasant or tribal community are for the most part multiplex: that is to say, they are not specialized to deal with a single activity. The watershed between traditional and modern society is exactly this distinction between single-interest and multiplex relationships. The hallmark of a modern society is the specialized role and the whole apparatus of its productive prosperity rests upon the division of labour between specialized roles.

Oriya peasant tries to transform the transaction, which he knows is one of exploitation, into a moral relationship, because it is in his interest to do so. In just the same way, when the campaigning politician addresses him as 'brother', the peasant sees this as an act of hypocrisy, and looks behind the facade of symbolic friendliness for the hidden interest.

For the villagers, the moral community comprises their own family, the members of their own caste in the same village, their fellow villagers (markedly graded according to their distance from ego in the caste system), their kinsmen in other villages and their caste fellows in other villages, and getting near to the limit, people of other castes in those villages. Then, after a gap, come people who are villagers like them, with the same style of life and speaking the

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same dialect, but with whom, as yet, no connection can be traced: if they desire to be admitted to the moral community, the villagers use elaborate and rigorous techniques to test their cultural credentials.

Beyond this category are people whose culture—the way they speak, the way they dress, their department, the things they speak about as valuable and important—places them unambiguously beyond the moral community of the peasant.

Those who are given the highest status as members of the community are able to bear social responsibilities while commanding the corresponding social rights, and they relegate the lowest into a category which is scarcely human. Those who are so marginal as to be considered outsiders can be used as if they were objects or instruments, providing the user has the power to do so: this is not regarded as a moral relationship, but as one of exploitation. [*cf.* Bailey, 1971 (1966): 302].

A village community with a strong sense of internal solidarity also has a well-defined sense of distinctness in relation to the outside world. Thus, the inhabitants of neighbouring villages are always treated as strangers. They are treated differently, though with varying degree of antipathy. The following statement by one of my informants will best illustrate this ethical relativism: 'It is not permissible to beat the people from our own village (swojacy, dialect) but the people from other villages can (and should) be beaten.' (*cf.* Dobrowolski, 1958).

Men who come on bicycles and in jeeps, but never on their feet. These are the people to be outwitted: these are the people whose apparent gifts are by definition the bait for some hidden trap.

Villagers recognize two kinds of big men: a secular leader whom we will call 'chief' and a man of religious eminence whom the villagers call a 'yogi' or a 'guru' (teacher) but whom we will call a 'saint'. Those who form a closer relationship as pupils or disciples choose to do so for ideological or moral reasons: the saint does not drum up a following in the way that a chief does.

The mediating role has probably been the most effective in spanning the gap between peasants and elite. This is the village

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broker, the man who makes a profession of helping officials or politicians and peasants to communicate with one another, and is paid either directly or indirectly for doing so. Although his stock in trade is the favour he has done for people, such a man is not honoured or even trusted by the villagers. He is a renegade, a half-outsider, albeit necessary to temper the cold winds of bureaucracy.

Bailey has discussed a number of roles which, at first sight, might seem to provide a moral commitment by holding the trust of the peasants. But virtually in all cases this trust is withdrawn if the broker is seen to be a missionary for modernization.

No peasant thinks in terms of five-year plans, and the idea of planning can exist only in those cognitive maps which include the idea of man in control of predictable and controllable impersonal forces. In brief, both the uncertainty of peasant life and the fact that they explain failure by blaming people rather than by admitting a miscalculation or impersonal forces means that policy making and planning are not part of their cognitive map of the world and human society.

A man whose crop is poor when all others have good crops cannot blame witches if he is known to be a slovenly cultivator: it is recognized that with luck (i.e., the absence of human malevolence and adverse fate) good crops are the result of hard work and skilled cultivation.

"But, as is perhaps true also in (western) society, few people think hard work and skill a means of changing a poor man into a rich man in twenty years' time: if changes like that happen, they come overnight by mystical means, by magic or fate or luck; by finding a crock of gold; in our culture by devious and anti-social property deals or by winning on the football pools." (*cf.* Bailey, 1971 (1966): 315).

Peasants are known to be fatalists and for very good reasons. Whatever the stability of nature's grand design, they see little security in their own life. When women die during childbirth and children die young, even as infants, in circumstances like this, no one can feel that man is the master of his environment: nature may have a grand continuing design, but a man's life is filled with discontinuities.

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"Some peasants have learned to see time as an arrow: and most peasants, at least in countries like India, are from time to time compelled to behave as if they saw time that way. But when there is failure, where accidents occur and the arrow misses the target, then they look for explanations and they take initiatives in the idiom of the round of time—in terms of human wickedness rather than of scientific error." (*ibid.*: 316). Sorcery has been attributed to lack of success in many fields including agriculture, as we have observed among peasants and tribal groups. "Spectacular success is evil because your success means my failure: my failure is caused by your malevolence. Outsiders talk about spectacular change and spectacular success, but we peasants can only be instruments in their schemes: in any case, if their fantasies were realized, this could only be by anti-social means." (*ibid.*, 316).

Traditionally peasants have relied not only on their professional knowledge of agricultural techniques and age-old folk knowledge of the seasons, rainfall, weather, soil quality etc., but also on the magical and religious insurance against hazards and failures. Wooing the supernatural in their battle of is survival enmeshed with technology and this synthesis has stood them in good stead against imponderable forces, terrestrial and supernatural. But this conviction is wearing thin these days with the induction of new farm technology. For long the peasants have been upbraided as conservatives. Their constraints even in the new technocratic/ bureaucratic set up still weigh them down and make them wary of new innovations.

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Odissi

History

Although the existence of a very sophisticated from of dance, for centuries, in the region that is today called Orissa is testified to by many treatises on dance as well as literary works, it is amazing that the dance form of Odissi received recognition as a classical dance style in modern India only in the middle of the twentieth century.

In the earlier part of the twentieth century there were two popular dance forms in vogue in Orissa and these were degenerated forms of the earlier Mahari and Gotipua dances. It was as a result of the valiant efforts of scholars, gurus and exponents that these dance forms were stylized, polished and presented before stalwarts of the Indian cultural scene whereby the dance of Orissa, from now on termed Odissi (the name was given by the scholar Kalicharan Pattanaik), received recognition as one of the major classical dances of India. It is interesting to note that the *Abhinaya Chandrika*, one of the authoritative books on the dance of Orissa was discovered in its palm leaf manuscript form and printed only in the first half of the twentieth century.

The earliest mention of the dance of Orissa is found in Bharata's *Nātyaśāstra*, where in Chapter 13, four different styles of classical dances are referred to. These are *Avanti, Dakshinatya, Panchali* and *Odra Magadhi*. Bharata says that the *Odra Magadhi* style flourished in Odra, Kalinga, Banga, Nepal and in states of eastern India.

The *Abhinaya Chandrika*, written more than a milennium later, refers to seven schools of dance: *Magadhi, Sauraseni, Karnata, Kerala,*

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Gauda, Panchanada and *Odra.* The author while referring to the distinctive traits of these various styles says that *Odra* is outstanding for its display of emotions and sentiments.

The state of Orissa, covering the northeastern coastal area and the adjacent hinterland of the Deccan peninsula, encompasses the territories known in history as Kalinga, Utkala, Tosali, Kangoda, Odra, Dasarna and southern Kosala. The present name of Orissa came to be applied to this region since the fourteenth century.

The Odras are referred to in the *Ramayana, Mahabharata, Manu Samhita, Nātyaśāstra* and many ancient texts. The Odras merged with the Utkals and other races to form the present day Oriya people who ethnically as well as culturally represent a blend of the Aryans and Dravidians as well as tribal people.

As Odissi dance is inseparably connected with religion and spirituality, it is essential to study the development of Odissi dance in the perspective of Orissa's political as well as religious history. The earliest institutionalized religion in Orissa was Jainism with King Kharavela as its chief protector. The Hatigumpha inscriptions (200 BC) and Udaygiri rock carvings all testify to King Kharavela's love for and patronage of the arts including that of dance.

The carvings during Kharavela's reign—second century BC—provide the earliest evidences of dance representations in India. Yet after this time, till the coming of Mahayana Buddhism in the sixth century AD, there are no records to give us any clue regarding the state of the arts including dance.

Mahayana Buddhism, modified in Orissa by the Tantric cult, provides us with the next set of evidences regarding the sophisticated level of dance in Orissa at that time (sixth century AD). A number of sculptures of this period depict both human beings as well as deities such as Marichi, Vajra Varahi, Aparajita and Heruka in beautiful, stylized dance poses.

The Brahmanical Tantric temples ascribed to the eighth century AD, such as those in Hirapur and Ranipur, are also replete with figures of exquisite dancers.

Śaivism, which has had a strong influence in Orissa from as early as the fourth century AD, as evidenced from the Brahmi inscription

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in Keonjhar, has always fostered the arts of dance and music. The Shiva temples in Bhubaneswar—Bharateswar, Laxmaneswar, Satrughneswar and Parasurameswar—built during the sixth-seventh century by the Sailodbhava rulers not only have majestic images of Nataraj, with variations in his dance pose, but also innumerable panels depicting dancers and musicians.

From the eighth to the tenth century the Kara rulers of the Bhauma dynasty ruled Orissa. Though Buddhist by faith, the Bhauma-Karas were not only tolerant towards, but also encouraged scholars and artistes of other faiths. A number of temples built during their time bear testimony to the sophisticated level the art of dance had reached during their time.

The monarchs of the Kesari dynasty of Mahakosala who ruled Orissa during the tenth and eleventh century were devout Hindus who patronized the temple related arts of dance and music. A number of temples built during their time, including the Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar, not only show dance sculptures and carvings but also have records that state that dancers were dedicated to the temples.

In fact, till the end of the eleventh century all the various clans, such as the Chedis, Sailodbhavs, Nandas, Bhanjas, Kesaris, Haihayas and others, who ruled different parts of present day Orissa contributed in some way to the fostering of the arts of dance and music.

The Ganga dynasty that came into power at the end of the eleventh century united the entire region, their kingdom extending from the Hooghly to the Godavari, from the Bay of Bengal to the highlands on the west.

Anantavarma Chodagangadeva (1076–1147 AD) was the king who gave Orissa imperial status. He was at once a great conqueror, an able administrator, a devout Hindu and a patron of the arts—architecture, painting, literature, music and dance. He built the famous Jagannath temple at Puri, which became the seat of religion and culture not only for all the Oriya-speaking people, but for the neighbouring areas as well. It was under his influence that the Gangas shifted their focus of worship from Śaivism to Vaishnavism.

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The Puri temple started by Chodagangadeva and expanded by his son Rajaraja II (1170–1194) displays magnificent sculptures of gods, celestial beings and humans in different dance poses.

Chodagangadeva appointed *devadasi*-s to dance and sing before the Lord as a part of the service at the Jagannath and other temples that he established. Rajaraja II continued this tradition as is evident from the records of the Jagannath temple. These *devadasis* were called *maharis* from '*maha nari*' or 'exalted lady'.

Anangabhimadeva (1211–1238), another illustrious Ganga king, had his daughter Chandrika learn the fine arts of music and dance. After an untimely widowhood she dedicated herself to Vishnu, offering her skill in the arts. This clearly reveals the veneration with which the arts of music and dance were looked on.

The Ganga rule lasted for almost five centuries (1076–1435 AD) and the contribution of the kings to the political, social and cultural life of the Oriyas is immense. They built most of the grand temples and architectural wonders that we find in Orissa. Narasimha I (1238–1264) built the Konark temple in the thirteenth century. The *Nata Mandira* with its unique dance sculptures clearly testifies to the fact that dance performances were a regular feature in front of the shrine.

The Raja-Rani temple in Bhubaneswar, built during the early part of the Ganga reign, also has innumerable dance sculptures including poses of a number of *nayikas* (heroines).

Jayadeva composed his immortal *Geeta Govinda* during the Ganga regime, in the twelfth century. He himself was a *Natyacharya* (Drama-director) and his wife Padmavati a *devadasi* and his work was perhaps composed keeping in mind the fact that dancers would perform it.

When the last Ganga ruler—the licentious and incapable Bhanudeva IV—died childless in 1435, his able minister Kapileswara Routray became the king. He assumed the title of Kapilendradeva and with him started the rule of the Surya *vamsa* or the Solar dynasty. With his scholarship, courage and wisdom he laid the foundations of a strong empire that reached the zenith of its glory during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Though the rule of the Gajapati kings of the Solar dynasty lasted only for 105 years, it was unparalleled in glory in all respects: political

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expansion, material comfort and the flourishing of the arts, including literature, painting and music and dance.

Sri Jagannath Misra, court-poet of Gajapati Harekrishnadeva (1716–1720) describes dancers who performed in the royal court. A number of other literary works written during this period also have references to various types and classes of dancers, besides those attached to the temples. The Oriya *Mahabharata* written by Sarala Das in the mid fifteenth century has innumerable references to dance and dancers who are referred to as *Barayosita, Bara nari, Ganika, Bilasini* etc. In *Virata Parva,* elaborate descriptions of dance costumes and ornaments are found. The *Utsaba mandiras* or theatres are also mentioned.

Kapilendradeva's son Purusottamadeva married the princess of Kanchi who was renamed Padmavati and served Lord Jagannath by dancing before him in the temple. This indicates with what high regard the art of dance was looked on during that time.

Purusottamadeva's son Prataparudradeva, though not a great warrior, was a great patron of religion and the arts. It was during his time that Chaitanyadeva came to Orissa and converted Ramananda Pattanaik the Governor of Rajamahendri who thereafter came to be known as Ramananda Raya.

Ramananda was a great scholar, poet, dramatist and a Vaishnavite philosopher. As per the accounts given in the *Chaitanya Charitamrita,* he taught the *devadasis satvika abhinaya* as well as *sanchari bhava* or elaborations and variations in expressive content, and engaged them in dance dramas that were till then the exclusive domain of boys and men.

At this time King Prataparudradeva made the singing and dancing of the *Geeta Govinda* an indispensable part of the service in the Jagannath temple of Puri. As we see, vast strides were made in the field of dance during this time.

In the sixteenth century *Dandi Ramayana* of Balaram Das, we have descriptions of the dancing *apsaras.* Their dance style, costumes and musical accompaniment have a close resemblance with modern Odissi dance. Narasinha Sena's *Parimala Kavya* written in the

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sixteenth century describes in detail the exquisite dance of Tilottama in a marriage festival.

Several literary works such as Sarala Das's Oriya *Mahabharata*, Pitambara Das's *Nrusinha Purana*, the Oriya *Harivamsa* and other texts testify to the fact that there was a separate class of female dancers, other than the *devadasis*, who performed in festivals and processions and who were more or less prostitutes.

Orissa was conquered by the Afghans of Bengal in 1568. Kalapahad, the general of Suleiman Karnani destroyed everything that was of any value to the Hindus. And along with religious practices, the arts along with dance suffered a severe set back.

The great Moghul general Todarmall defeated the Afghans and installed Ramachandradeva as the king. Under this new rule, Hindu practices resurfaced and dance was again reinstated in the temples. But due to the weak political situation, and constant Muslim raids, the arts did not flourish.

The Marathas became the rulers of Orissa in the mid-eighteenth century. Though their rule was brief, they contributed substantially to the cultural scene. Staunch Hindus, they revived temple services and built many new temples. They also patronized literature and the arts.

The British annexed Orissa in 1803. The British neither patronized nor interfered with the arts and religious practices. Though temple dancing continued, lack of patronage often led the dancers to seek other means of livelihood and they often fell prey to rich and powerful people.

The boy dancers or *Gotipuas* who had come into the forefront with the decline of the *Mahari* tradition performed outside the main temple. But gradually their style was also degraded in order to pander to the cheap tastes of their rich customers.

It was again in the twentieth century that Odissi dance underwent an ethnic cleansing. And after an intelligent merging of the various traditions, and with the support of scholars and researchers as well as gurus and dancers, reestablished itself as one of the foremost classical dance forms of India.

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Technique

With research and awareness, a number of texts on dance and music have been recovered in Orissa. These include Maheswara Mohapatra's *Abhinaya Chandrika* (15th Century AD), *Sangeeta Kaumudi* (15th century AD), the *Natya Manorama, Sangeeta Narayana* by Gajapati Narayanadeva (17th century AD), *Sangeeta Muktavali* by Harichandana (16th century AD), Jadunath Singha's *Abhinaya Darpana Prakash* (17th century AD), Harihar Mishra's *Sangeeta Kalpalata* (17th century AD), *Geeta Prakash* by Krishnadas Badajena Mohapatra, *Sangeeta Kamoda* by Damodara Acharya, *Sangeeta Ratna* by Narayana and many more.

Though details of the dance style are given in these early texts, a general consensus regarding the technique has been arrived at by scholars who have no doubt consulted the available texts and merged it with the living tradition.

The distinctive characteristic of Odissi dance is that it is replete with beauty, charm and sensuous, delicate *abhinaya* and that all the poses are highly stylized, closely resembling the sculptures of the temples of Orissa.

Although Odissi is more inclined towards the graceful and lilting *lasya* style of dance, elements of vigorous presentation or *tandava* (known in Oriya as *ugra nrutya*) are also featured at times. All the four forms of *abhinaya* mentioned in treatises on dance—*angika, vachika, aharya* and *sattvika*—are present in Odissi.

The human body, in this dance style, is treated in terms of three *bhanga*-s or flexions along the line of the neck and the waist and thus the head and the hips are deflected away from the torso. In other words, one bend is formed by crossing the legs, the second by the curve at the waist formed by shifting the hip to one side, and the third by an inclination of the head. This pose, so typical of Odissi dance and many of the sculptures of Orissa, is called *Tribhangi* and is identified as the pose of *Natavar* Krishna.

The other major pose is the *Chaukha* where the weight is equally distributed and a geometrical shape like a square is formed with the hands and feet being at a distance from each other, pointing outwards and the thighs being parallel to the ground.

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Pada Bheda

The *Abhinaya Chandrika* mentions four different kinds of *Pada Bheda*-s or positions of the feet.

1. *Stambhapada*: Movements of the feet are straight and simple and the legs are joined, resembling a pillar.
2. *Kumbhapada*: The feet are joined at the heels and the knees are flexed, pointing outwards, thus forming a pitcher-like pose.
3. *Dhanupada*: One foot remains straight while the other bent foot crosses it, resembling a bow.
4. *Mahapada*: One foot is held above the ground. The movements of the feet alternate while executing this *pada*.

The *Abhinaya Chandrika* states that beside these *Padas*, there are others mentioned in ancient texts such as the *Sama, Bishama, Suchyagra, Ghatita, Agratala, Talasanchara, Mardita, Ghurana, Parsvaga* and *Samakunchana* etc. But all these are of secondary importance.

Traditional positions of the feet such as *Rekhapada, Ashritapada* and *Nupurapada* are also occasionally employed in Odissi dance.

Beside the use of the flat foot, the heel is also used to strike the ground.

Bhumi

Related to the *Padabheda*-s are the *Bhumi*-s or imaginary lines that a dancer's feet follow while performing on the stage. The *Abhinaya Chandrika* refers to eight *bhumi*-s.

1. *Sama*: feet move in their natural positions.
2. *Visama*: feet move to the left or the right in a straight line.
3. *Padma*: the dancer covers an oval space.
4. *Trikonaka* or *Minadandi*: a triangular shape is depicted by moving forward and tracing an arc with each foot
5. *Swastika*: the feet are crossed.
6. *Chakra (Ghera)*: movement is in concentric circles.
7. *Vartula*: the circumference of a circle is traced with the feet.
8. *Chaturasra (Chauka)*: the feet trace the outline of an imaginary square.

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Chari

Chari refers to the different kinds of gaits or steps taken by the dancer. A number of *Charis* mentioned in Nandikeshwara's *Abhinaya Darpana*, such as *Chalana, Chankramana, Sarana, Begini, Kuttana, Luthita* and *Visama* are employed in Odissi.

Again, *Charis* mentioned by Sarangadeva in *Sangeet Ratnakar*, such as the *Rathachakra, Paravritta, Syandita, Marala, Karihasta, Urubeni, Katara, Mriga Trasa, Ardha Mandalika* and *Sthitabrata* are used for the *Bhaumi Charis* or Gaits on the Ground and *Nupurapadika, Apakranta, Atikranta* and *Pluta* for *Akashiki Charis* or Movements above Ground.

Beside these the *Abhinaya Chandrika* also mentions certain indigenous *Charis* such as *Unmukhi, Kshyana, Nagaramalini, Kshina, Kutila, Chakra* and *Pesini.*

Bhramari

Bhramari or pirouettes are called *Bhaunri* in Odissi. The *Bhramaris Ekapada, Chakra, Kunchita* and *Anga* mentioned in the *Abhinaya Darpana* are all used in Odissi. But the most commonly used is the *Ekpada Bhramari* in which the dancer spins on one foot maintaining the *Chauka* stance. This is performed both clockwise and anti-clockwise. *Utpluta Bhramari*, where the dancer jumps forward and turns on the heels, is used during abstract dance (*Nritta*).

Bhangi

Basic poses and movements of abstract dance (*Nritta*) are known as *Bhangi*. Odissi has a rich variety of *bhangis*, many of which are also found sculpted in stone in the various temples of Orissa. The recurring pose in these sculptures is that of *tribhangi* or three bends: knee flexed, hip deflected and head inclined.

Many of the *bhangi*-s used in Odissi dance have resemblances to or are identical with the *karana-s* described in the *Nātyaśāstra*. The *karana-s Samanakha, Leena, Lalita* and *Dandapada* are known in Odissi as *Sthayi, Pranata, Biraja* and *Nibedana*. The following *karana*-s are also

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often employed in Odissi: *Gandasuchi, Dolapada, Gajakridita, Dandarechita, Chatura, Karihasta, Ghurnita, Nikutta, Swastika, Rechita, Parivritta, Katisama, Urdhvajanu, Vidyutbhranta, Unmatta, Chinna, Mandala, Swastika, Talavilasita* and *Valita.*

The *karana*-s with acrobatic movements such as *Mayuralita, Gangabatarana, Atikranta, Chakramandala Sakatasya* exist in *Bandha Nritya.*

The *bhangi*-s recorded in *Abhinaya Chandrika* such as *Asana, Mardala, Nikunchaka, Shukhachanchu, Uttolika, Aratrika, Kshipta, Sarakshepa, Srutikula, Nibedana, Potala, Biraja, Gopana, Taranga, Padabalaya, Abhimana, Kumbhaka, Mesha, Juddha, Pranata* etc. are all used in present day demonstrations of Odissi.

The traditional *bhangis* of Bandha Nritya include *Thai, Darpani* and *Nakhi.*

Hasta

Hasta-s or hand gestures are an integral part of Odissi dance. As in the other classical dance traditions of India Odissi, too, uses *hastas* for decorative as well as interpretative purposes in *Nritta* (abstract dance) and *Nritya* (expressive dance) respectively.

The *hastas* mentioned in the *Nātyaśāstra, Abhinaya Darpana, Sangeeta Ratnakara* and a host of palm-leaf manuscripts in Oriya such as *Natya Manorama, Sangeeta Kalpalata, Abhinaya Darpana Prakash* are to a large extent used in Odissi. But the closest resemblance to the present day usage of *hastas* is with those mentioned in the *Abhinaya Chandrika* of Maheswara Mohapatra. This text clearly exhibits knowledge of the earlier Sanskrit treatises, but it also records a number of *hastas* that are indigenous. The major *asamyukta hastas* mentioned in the *Abhinaya Chandrika* are sixteen in number.

Present day Odissi combines *hastas* from the early Sanskrit texts as well as those that have been handed down through the oral tradition. Often the gestures are the same as those mentioned in the early texts, but the names are closer to those of the *Abhinaya Chandrika.* In fact Odissi combines traditional as well indigenous gestures of the hand.

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A comparative study of the usages today and the references in earlier texts is as follows:

Name of Hasta as in Odissi today	*Abhinaya Chandrika*	*Nātyaśāstra/ Abhinaya Darpan*	*Usage in Odissi*
Dhwaja	Dhwaja	Pataka	Victory
Danda	Danda	———	Staff, Initiation
Tripataka		Tripataka (in both)	Decorative purpose
Kartarimukha		Kartarimukha	Lightning
Sarpasira	Sarpashira	———	Fear, tension
Balaya	Balaya	———	Concentration
Dhyana	Dhyana	Arala/Arala	Meditation
Dhyana (inverted)	Abhaya	Arala/Arala	Assurance
Prabodhika	Prabodhika	Alapadma(in both)	Consolation
Shukachanchu	Shukachanchu	———	
Ankusha	Ankusha	Kapittha (in both)	Playing cymbals
Bhaya	Bhaya	Mukula (in both)	Fear
Birodha	Birodha	Mushti (slight variaition)	Differences
Lulita	Lulita	———/Dolahasta	Decorative, used at beginning of a dance
Nirdesika	Nirdeshika	Suchi/ Suchimukha	Showing direction
Tambula	Tambula	Ardhasuchi	To depict beauty
Bastra	Bastra	———	Apparel
Hansapakshya	Hamsapakshya	Mrigasirsha (in both)	Swan wing
Gomukha	Gomukha	———/ Simhamukha	Used in Ugra nritya
Chatura	Chatura	Chatura of N.S. is different	Used in Tandava dance
Bhramara		Bhramara of N.S. is different	
Chaturmukha	Chaturmukha	———	Used at the end of the dance.
Mrugakshya	Mrugakshya	———/Hamsasya	Doe eye, used in nritta
Ardhachandra	Ardhachandra	Ardhachandra	Sky, height
Aratrika	Aratrika	Shikhara	
Kshipta	Kshipta	Alapadma	Alapadma
Hansasya		Hamsasya of N.S. is different	

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The other Asamyukta Hasta Mudras used in Odissi dance today are *Damsa, Urnanava, Bana, Puspa, Padmakosa, Dhanu, Pechakamukha* and *Bardhamanaka* (cf. photographs on *Asamyukta Hasta Mudras*). The *Abhinaya Chandrika* gives details of the placing of each *hastak* in various regions or *kshetras* of the body and also sometimes gives details of the foot movements accompanying them. A great deal of the grammatical details recorded in this treatise have been adopted by Odissi dancers of today.

Samyukta Hasta Mudra

In the case of *Samyukta hastas*, or hand gestures where both hands are used, Odissi has resemblances with those described in Nandikeshwar's *Abhinaya Darpana*. But there are many similarities with the *hastas* described in the treatises written in Orissa such as the *Abhinaya Chandrika* and *Sangeet Narayana*. In addition to this, there are a number of *hastas* that are not recorded by scholars but that have been handed down by the oral tradition.

The *Samyukta hastas* in popular use today are:

1. *Anjali*
2. *Parswanjali*
3. *Archaka*
4. *Karkatika*
5. *Mesajuddha*
6. *Baddha*
7. *Kapota*
8. *Sankha*
9. *Chakra*
10. *Potala*
11. *Pasha*
12. *Samputa*
13. *Matsya*
14. *Kurma*
15. *Baraha*
16. *Pradipa*
17. *Dhwajamusti*
18. *Khatwa*
19. *Baddha-Kartarika*
20. *Ubhaya-Kartari*
21. *Garuda*
22. *Shivalinga*
23. *Dwisikha*
24. *Kirita*
25. *Upadhana*
26. *Yogaprada*

In interpreting Vaishnava lyrics, when one line is used for multiple variations in expression, new delineations of *hastas* are used to serve the artistic and creative requirements.

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Mukhaja Byanjana

Mukhaja Byanjana or Facial Expression is categorized in the *Abhinaya Chandrika* as being of several types:

1. *Baddha:* lips closed
2. *Lasya:* soft and feminine
3. *Mrudu:* subtle
4. *Ugra:* eyes wide open, teeth visible
5. *Bikata:* tongue wags
6. *Vyadana:* mouth wide open

The last three are used in *Ugra Nritta* and are not suitable for women.

Today, in Odissi, the interpretation of the lyrics have a strong bent towards *Shringara* and *Bhakti Rasa* with the other sentiments coming in as per the requirements of the dance interpretations. The guru, in the process of interpreting the lyrics, usually teaches facial expressions.

Various Styles and Variations

The two living traditions of Odissi dance are those of the *Mahari* and the *Gotipua.*

Mahari

The word *Mahari* literally means *maha nari* or exalted woman. The custom of offering girls as the consort or the handmaiden of the temple deity is a very ancient Hindu practice. Several *Puranas* such as the *Shiva, Skanda, Padma* and *Vishnu Puranas* advise the consecration of women in honour of gods.

There is enough historical evidence to prove that the *devadasi* cult was prevalent throughout India in regions as widespread as Kashmir, Bengal, Orissa, Saurashtra, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Mysore, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. But somehow this cult has survived up to modern times only in Orissa. Known as *Devadasis* in

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other parts of India, in Orissa they were called *Maharis* and their duty was to entertain the deity.

A girl is initiated as *Mahari* by having a silk cloth from the deity tied around her head. Thereafter, she cannot live in a household nor look directly at any man. Special areas are given for their living quarters near the temple where they belong.

The *Maharis* of Orissa trace their origin to the *apsaras* (celestial dancers Rambha and Urvashi). According to legends, the two *Apsaras* came and danced when the Jagannath Temple was founded.

King Udyota Kesari, in his inscription in the Brahmeswar temple states that his mother, Kolavati Devi (tenth century AD) built the temple and consecrated dancing girls to it. The Megheswar temple of Bhubaneswar and the Sobhaneswar temple of Cuttack district built in the latter half of the twelfth century also have inscriptions referring to the beautiful dancing girls.

Anantavarma Chodagangadeva ascribed the services of dancing girls at the Madhukeswar temple that he built at Mukhalingam. The same was later introduced in the Jagannath temple at Puri, where there were groups of Oriya as well as Telegu *devaganika*-s or *devadasi*-s. Rajaraja Deva II, the son of Chodagangadeva, consecrated twenty *devadasis* to the Jagannath temple.

The Vaishnava disciples of Sri Ramanuja were perhaps instrumental in the introducing the *devadasis* for the purposes of music and dance for Lord Jagannath at Puri. Prataparudradeva's inscription in the Jagannath Temple (1499 AD) refers to the dancing girls who performed during prescribed rituals at this temple.

Although all the *devadasis* of the Jagannath temple are called *Maharis*, they are divided into several categories according to the work they do. The dancers are called *Nachuni*, those who sing within the temple are called *Bhitara Gauni* and those who sing in front of the temple are called *Bahara Gauni*. All the accompanists are male.

The *Maharis* follow a strict chronological order in their performance in the *taala* patterns of Pahapata, Sarimana, Parameswara, Malashree, Harachandi, Chandan Jhoola, Shreemangala, Bachanika and Jhuti Atha Tali. Their *abhinaya* is based exclusively on Jayadeva's

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Geeta Govinda. Generally the musical accompaniment consists of the *mardala* or pakhawaj and the *gini* or small cymbals.

The dance during the morning offering or *Sakala Dhupa* is performed in the *nata mandir* and consists of *nritta* or abstract dance. The dance during the evening service or *Bada Singar* is performed in the innermost sanctuary and consists of *nritya* or expressive dance to the accompaniment of songs from the *Geeta Govinda.*

There was another category of *Maharis* called *Patuaris* who danced during the *Patuars* or ceremonial processions of Lord Jagannath such as Ratha Yatra, Chandan Yatra, Dola Yatra and Jhulan Yatra. Neither the *Patuaris* nor the dance during ceremonial processions is there today.

The various Muslim attacks by Sultan Firuz Shah in 1360, Hussain Shah in 1510 and finally the conquest by the Afghans in 1568, naturally disrupted the services of the *Maharis.* They, too, originally the handmaidens of the Lord, began to lead dissolute lives, driven by poverty.

Ramachandradeva who ascended the throne with the help of the Moghuls reappointed the *Maharis.*

Only a few *Maharis* live today. Most of them prefer to marry and live as householders and the *Mahari* tradition is on the wane.

The *Maharis* Harapriya and Kokilaprava helped in the reconstruction of Odissi dance. Kokilaprava lives today and at present only sings at the Jagannath temple.

There are a few *Maharis* in other temples but they do not enjoy much respect.

Gotipua

Goti in Oriya means 'single' and *pua* 'boy'. The dance of a solo boy in female garb is known as *Gotipua* dance. When the *Mahari* cult was on the wane, the *Gotipua* system was perhaps created in an attempt to keep alive the dance tradition. The *Gotipuas* have contributed significantly to the reconstruction of Odissi dance and most of the Odissi gurus of modern times were *Gotipua* dancers in their youth.

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The Gotipuas were not heard of before the seventeenth century. Why they emerged is still a matter of conjecture. The later Vaishnavites, that is those after Ramanada and Chaitanyadeva, probably disapproved of women dancing and they applied the Vaishnava belief of offering oneself to the Lord in the *Sakhi bhava* to start this cult of young boys dressed as women to perform instead of the *devadasis*.

The Bhoi king Ramachandradeva who was placed on the throne of Orissa by the Moghuls after the continuous Muslim attacks, not only revived the temple services but also set up *akhadas* or gymnasiums to physically train young men so that they could protect the temple from intruders. The *Akhadas* also served as centers for culture and trained these *Gotipuas*.

In the course of time, zamindars and rich men also started patronizing the *Gotipuas* and by the end of the nineteenth century there emerged a number of professional *Gotipua* parties, consisting of the Guru who sang and conducted the performance, one or two *Gotipuas* and a *mardala* and a *gini* player.

Though both the *Gotipuas* as well as the *Maharis* dance in the Odissi style, their technique, costume and mode of presentation are different. The *Maharis* perform to songs of Jayadeva's *Geeta Govinda* and are accompanied by male singers. The *Gotipuas* perform to compositions of Vaishnava poets of Orissa and often sing themselves.

The *Gotipuas* were not allowed to dance within the temple. Only on some festive occasions were they allowed to dance in the temple precincts. Their dance was at one time indispensable during Chandan Jatra and Jhulan Jatra.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the *Gotipua* style was influenced by the decadent *Sakhi Nacha* of southern Orissa. The influence of cheap film dances also furthered its degradation.

The *Gotipua* dance technique, refined and sophisticated, features as a major ingredient of Odissi dance.

Bandha Nritya

A notable item in the *Gotipua* style is the acrobatic *Bandha Nritya*. A great deal of suppleness and physical fitness is required for its performance.

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Maheswar Mohapatra's *Abhinaya Chandrika* (15th century AD) and Chatura Damodar Pandit's *Sangeeta Darpana* (16th century AD) give us accounts of *Bandha Nritya*. The *Abhinaya Chandrika* enumerates ten varieties of *Bandhas*: *Gagana, Dwimukha, Torana, Shayana, Kshudra, Trishula, Brutanga, Damaru, Pradipa* and *Mithunasraya*. These varieties also have local names such as *Chira, Nahunia, Mayura, Chara-Mayura* and *Sagadi*.

The fact that acrobatic movements and poses featured in a big way in traditional Indian dance is testified even in Bharata's description of the *Karanas* such as *Mayuralalita, Harinapluta, Gangabatarana, Vishnukranta, Atikranta* etc. This tradition of acrobatic dance has unfortunately not survived in most parts of India. *Bandha Nritya*, handed down in the *gurumukhi* or oral tradition, maintains the acrobatic style of dance and features today in the modern Odissi repertoire.

The difficult technique makes it possible for only young men and girls with a high degree of physical fitness to execute it. That is why it is becoming rare these days.

Repertoire

Till the middle of the nineteenth century an Odissi dance performance was not divided into separate items. Rather it continued as one piece gradually leading to the climax with the *bhakti bhava* or the devotional attitude dominating. *Nritta* and *Nritya* were included but there were no distinctive items. The gurus and scholars who worked hard to reestablish the dance of Orissa in all its finesse created a repertoire that is followed today.

This consists of the following items:

1. *Mangalacharan*
2. *Batu Nrutya*
3. *Pallavi*
4. *Abhinaya*
5. *Bandha Nritya* (Optional)
6. *Mokshya*

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Mangalacharan

This is an invocatory piece in which salutation is offered to Lord Jagannath, the presiding deity of the temple at Puri, to the *Rangabhumi* or the dance arena and to the earth or *Bhumi.* The salutation and offering of flowers is combined with exquisite poses in the *Chauka* and *Tribhangi* styles and decorative gaits to rhythmic combinations. After the initial salutations the dancer performs the *Vandana* or a hymn in praise of a particular deity. These invocatory verses are in Sanskrit and are sung by the vocalist who accompanies the dancer. The popular invocations are in praise of Ganesha, Shiva, Krishna, Jagannath, Durga and Saraswati. Sometimes five deities are invoked in the invocatory verse, as in *Panchadeva Vandana.* The *Vandana* is followed by execution of different steps to *ukutas* or rhythmic combinations that are played on the pakhawaj and recited as well. The item ends with salutation to the gods and the audience.

Batu Nrutya

This is a pure abstract dance or *nritta* piece dedicated to Lord Shiva who is also known as Batuka Bhairava. The Tantric cult that was earlier in vogue in Orissa naturally included Bhairava worship and even when Vaishnavism engulfed Orissa, the worship of Shiva was not terminated.

Batu Nrutya begins with a series of exquisite poses signifying the playing of various musical instruments such as the veena, pakhawaj, flute and cymbals. Then a series of rhythmic patterns are executed through dance movements, the feet keeping the beats of the accompanying rhythmic combinations. The dance is not accompanied by a song. Instead there is a refrain of rhythmic syllables that is punctuated by *ukutas* executed in various *jatis,* each combination coming to a climax with a *katan* or *tihai.* There are at times *tala* variations within the item and the last sequence is usually performed in a fast tempo in *Jhula* or *Pahapat tala.*

Pallavi

The word *Pallavi* means 'that which is elaborated'. As the dance sequences, musical notes (*swaras*) and rhythmic syllables are

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successively varied, constantly resulting in new combinations, the piece is called *Pallavi.*

Previously there were two kinds of *Pallavis*: the *Swara Pallavi* and the *Vadya Pallavi.* As indicated by their names, the former laid greater emphasis on *swaras* or musical notes and an image of a *Raaga* or *Raaga-roop* was created. The latter concentrated on elaborating on a variety of rhythmic combinations. Today, dancers combine features of both. Rhythmic combinations are set to a *Raaga,* and while singing the rhythmic combinations emphasis is given to the building up of the image or ambience of the *Raaga. Pallavis* are composed in a number of *Raagas* and are known by the names of their respective *Raagas.* And so we have *Basanta Pallavi, Saveri Pallavi, Mohana Pallavi, Arabhi Pallavi* and those in which several *Raagas* are combined known as *Mishra Pallavi.*

The dance movements in *Pallavi* are extremely graceful and though there are exquisite and decorative poses that convey images of romance and beauty, the piece is primarily executed through *nritta* or abstract dance, except when images of the *Raaga* are created through meaningful dance sequences. As combinations of *swaras* and *ukutas* (rhythmic syllables) are sung by the vocalist, the dancer performs myriads of stylized poses in different tempos, making profuse use of movements of the eyes, eyebrows, neck and the upper torso while the feet execute combinations of rhythmic beats.

Abhinaya

Abhinaya or interpretative items add a significant dimension to the Odissi repertoire. These pieces, performed to the accompaniment of lyrics sung by the vocalists, bring into play myriads of emotions, the dominant mood being that of *shringara* (the amorous) that merges into *bhakti* (devotion). Each line of the lyric is interpreted on various levels—literal, metaphoric and symbolic—and presented through statuesque poses, gaits, exquisite movements of the limbs and the torso and delicate facial expression. The temple sculptures of ancient Orissa seem to have come alive and the audience is engrossed by the delicate nuances that are conveyed by the depth of the dancer's interpretation of the songs.

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The earliest *abhinaya* pieces on record were based on interpretations of Jayadeva's *Geeta Govinda.* This tradition of interpreting Jayadeva's lyrics was in vogue in Orissa since the twelfth century. Even today, performance to Jayadeva's *ashtapadis* form an important part of an Odissi dance recital. In the *Geeta Govinda* Radha's feelings for Krishna are portrayed with intense passion that encompasses the amorous—at times bordering on the carnal—and the mystical. Jayadeva is at once intense and passionate as well as devout and the dancer, too, portrays these emotions. In fact, in portraying the amorous sequences, different nuances of a lover's emotion as a result of different situations experienced is highlighted through *nayak-nayika bheda* and *ashta nayika* (different types of heroes and heroines and eight facets of a heroine impelled by different circumstances). Beside the items concentrating on Radha and Krishna's mystical love, another item from Jayadeva that is extremely popular is *Dash Avatar* or the portrayal of the ten incarnations of Vishnu.

In addition to interpretations of Jayadevas *ashtapadis*, which were written in Sanskrit, *abhinaya* pieces are also performed to songs of Oriya Vaishnavite poets. Preeminent among the medieval Oriya poets whose lyrics have become an integral part of the Odissi repertoire are Kavisurya Baladeva Ratha, Gopal Krishna Pattanaik and Banamali Das.

Jayadeva as well as the other medieval poets fixed the *raaga* and *taala* of their lyrics and these are still adhered to, thus maintaining the classical purity in the musical accompaniment. The slow tempo of the lyrics encouraged dancers to elaborate on the poetic content as there was no urgency to keep up with the rhythm and so the *abhinaya* is full of nuances and replete with levels of symbolic meaning, each movement and stance being executed with extreme care and awareness of beauty.

Moksha

The dance tradition of Orissa has been closely linked with religion and spiritualism and so it is only but natural that the ultimate aim

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of the dancer should be release from the Self and merging into the Infinite. And so each recital culminates in the *Moksha* or complete surrender of the Self to the Absolute.

The piece begins with rhythmic abstract dance performed to the accompaniment of beats that are recited and played on the pakhawaj, the usual *taalas* being Pahapata and Jhoola. Then come the chants that create an ambience of spirituality. The audience, too, is engulfed in an atmosphere of devout worship and spiritual frenzy as the dancer experiences complete selfless surrender while the all-encompassing chants of 'Aum' resound through the auditorium.

Literary and Musical Accompaniment

Jayadeva, the twelfth century Vaishnavite poet of Orissa, who composed the immortal *Geeta Govinda*, was married to the *devadasi* Padmavati. All his *ashtapadis* (lyrics consisting of eight couplets) seem to have been written for dance enactments. In fact, although Jayadeva received royal patronage, he was primarily a devotee and his lyrics, though replete with sensuous imagery, are bathed in mystical devotion. Jayadeva was happiest while singing the *Geeta Govinda* at the Jagannath temple and in seeing these verses come live through dance. He prescribed the *Raaga* and *Taala* of the lyrics and many of these are still adhered to.

In its earlier stage, all *abhinaya* in Odissi was based on the *Geeta Govinda*. Later, the works of other medieval Oriya poets who followed the tradition of Jayadeva—writing either in Sanskrit or Oriya began to be used. Foremost among the medieval Oriya poets whose works have inspired Odissi dancers and gurus are Upendra Bhanja, Kavisurya Baladeva Ratha, Banamali Das, Gopalkrushna Pattanaik and Dinakrushna. As the compositions of these poets are highly ornate and abound in imagery, they lend themselves to various levels of interpretation and intricate exposition through dance.

There are scholars, including the late Jivan Pani, who claim that Orissa had a highly sophisticated *music system* of its own as found described in Krishnadas Badajena Mohapatra's treatise *Gita Prakash*. But perhaps due to waning patronage the living classical tradition

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died and only regional lyrics such as the *Champu* and *Janana* retain the flavour. Efforts were made by Jivan Pani and Bankim Sethi to reconstruct the ragas mentioned in the *Geeta Govinda.*

In order to nurture the new evolving dance form Bhubaneswar Mishra, trained by the great violinist Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu of the Carnatic classical music style and Bala Krishna Das, trained by Bade Ghulam Ali Khan in the Hindusthani style reoriented the music. Most of the accompanying music of today's Odissi is composed by Bhubaneswar Mishra and Balakrishna Das, who not only set the lyrics to tune, but also composed *Pallavis* in *Raagas* Basanta, Sankarabharan, Kalyani, Arabhi, Bagesri, Khamaj, Saveri etc.

The *taalas* used in Odissi include *margiya* (classical) as well as *desi* (local) *taalas.*

The *margiya taalas* follow the pattern elaborately described while discussing the *taala* system under the section of the Musical Accompaniment of Bharata Natyam.

The *desi taalas* include:

1. **Pahapat:** 8 beats

+				!	0	!	0
Dhei	dhei	dhei	dhei	Dhei	tathi	nithi	na
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

2. **Jhula:** 6 beats

Dhaga dha	- dhin	ta-	Taga ta	- tin	ta-
1	2	3	4	5	6

This also has a variation with 2 gaps after each successive 3 beats, thus forming a total of 8 beats:

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Dhaga dha	-dhin	ta-	-	Taga ta	-tin	-ta	-
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

3. **Kuduk:** 12 beats

+	!	!	!	!	!	!	!	!	0	!	0
Jhena	kita	jhena	thei	Thina	kita	thina	thei	Tatho	muta	Dhadhi	ghene
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

4. **Sarimaan:** 14 beats with the following division: 4+4+2+4

+	!	!	!	!	!	!
Dhina	kita	dhina	thei	Thina	kita	thina
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
!	!	!	!	!	!	!
thei	Thina	kita	Thina	kita	thina	thei
8	9	10	11	12	13	14

5. **Aadh taali:** 7 beats with no sound on the first beat, thus creating an adhi or off-beat effect:

+	!	!	!	!	!	!
-	Jhe	na	Dha	dha	Jhe	na
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Costumes and Make-up

The costumes and make-up worn by the Odissi dancer today is deeply rooted in tradition.

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We find detailed descriptions of the ***aharya*** or costume, ornaments and make up of a dancer in a number of texts written in Orissa.

Sarala Das's *Mahabharata*, which is actually an Oriya adaptation of the original, describes Arjuna dressed as Brihannala, the dancer and dance teacher, in the court of King Birata. Arjuna wears the *Khandua Patani* or Odissi silk costume and ties his hair to form a *gabha* or decorative knot that is covered with *mukta-jali* (net made of pearls) and flowers. For ornaments he wears the *Sira Simantini* on the head, *Chapari* at the neck, *Dash Avatar Mala* as a garland, *Bala* and *Subarna Chudi* near the wrist, *Bahuto* as an armlet, *Mudi* on his fingers, *Katikinkini* and *Mekhala* at the waist and *Nupura* or bells on his ankles. His face is decorated with *Latapati*, that is creeper designs starting at the forehead and coming down to the cheeks.

Abhinaya Chandrika, the fifteenth century Oriya treatise on dance, written by Maheshwar Mohapatra emphasizes the importance of *aharya* in dance:

Besh bina na shobhante mudra drishtiadi chalanam (v 258)

(Gestures of the hands and various glances of the eyes lose their beauty without the support of becoming make-up and costume).

Besh binyasa sanyuktang nrityang netrapriyang bhabet (v 273)

(When combined with make-up and adornments, the dance becomes pleasing to the eyes).

The *Abhinaya Chandrika* describes *aharya* in detail. The costume is described as a *Patta* (silk) *sari* bright in hue and this is worn together with a *Kanchula* (blouse), a *Nibhibanda* (an apron-like piece worn around the hips) and a *Jhoba* (a cord with tassels tied around the waist). This costume is still worn by the *Maharis* of the Jagannath temple. The *Gotipua* dancers wear the *sari* in the fashion of a *dhoti*, with the *pallu* or the heavily decorated piece pleated in a fan-shape hanging from the waist. Modern dancers wear the sari both in the *Mahari* and the *Gotipua* style and sometimes it is stitched in this fashion, for the sake of convenience.

Three hairstyles are prescribed in the *Abhinaya Chandrika*. They are the *Puspachuda* (a bun decorated with flowers), *Ardhabhaktaka* (a hair-knot loosely tied at the back) and the *Katibeni* (plait coming

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down to below the waist). The first and second varieties are found in the temple sculptures of Orissa. Modern dancers prefer the *Puspachuda* and artificial flowers made of pith or silk are used as they are lighter and last longer.

The *Abhinaya Chandrika* mentions the use of *gorachana* or designs on the forehead made with sandalwood paste and of the *kumkum* or red bindi. *Kajal* or kohl is to be worn to emphasize the eyes and a red pigment or *alata* on the feet and the hands, especially the fingertips. This custom is followed today.

The ornaments mentioned are many and varied. The head is decorated with the *Mathamani* along the middle parting, with *Ketaki* along the hairline and with *Kakara* and *Ragada* on either side. *Koraka* and *Kapa* are worn on the lower ear and *Nagapasha* and *Bakulakalika* on the upper. Boys wear *Kundala* and *Biraballi* on their ears. Necklaces of varying lengths and shapes include *Capasarika, Amalaki, Sasrpi,* and *Padaka Tilaka.* On the arms are worn *Tayita, Kabacha* and *Kankana Tadaka. Atula, Kalyari* and *Karakankana* decorate the wrists. The waist is adorned with the *Bengapatia, Kapamala* and *Kinkini* and the feet with *Nupura, Pahuda* and *Bala.*

Modern dancers have reduced the number of ornaments. But the style is still adhered to. And instead of the earlier stone-studded gold jewelry, silver ornaments are used. The accompanying photographs give glimpses of today's dancers and their costume and make-up.

Recent Developments

Up to the first quarter of the twentieth century, Odissi did not receive recognition even in Orissa. The *Maharis* and *Gotipuas* carried on their respective dance traditions. The only living guru of the *Maharis,* Mohan Mohapatra was also teaching the *Gotipuas* and in *akhadas* or gymnasiums. The standard of the performance of *Maharis* was gradually deteriorating. And there was no formal training given by Odissi gurus in any recognized institution.

Minati Mishra and Priyambada Mohanty were the first Oriya girls of respectable families to start learning dance. But two Bengali gurus—Ajit Bose and Banabihari Maity—who were then teaching in

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Cuttack, taught them. At that time, the gurus who later made significant contribution to the revival of Odissi dance—Pankaj Charan Das, Kelucharan Mohapatra, Debaprasad Das, Mayadhar Rout and Raghunath Dutta—were all attached to professional theatre companies as dance masters and exponents.

But the scene changed rapidly.

Guru Pankaj Charan Das, the posthumous son of Kshetramani and the policeman Dharma Das, who was brought up by his aunt Ratnaprabha and Fakira, both *devadasis* was at once a *mardala* player and a dancer in the *Gotipua* style, having learnt these in the Ranganath Dev Goswami and Bikhari Charan Dalei Ras Leela Troupes. He also had training in Chhau and finally joined the Annapoorna Theatres where he came into contact with Kelu Charan Mohapatra.

Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra, born in a family of *Patachitrakars* (Traditional Painters), secretly learnt the art of dance at the *akhada* of Balbhadra Sahu. His joining the theatre and his interactions with Pankaj Charan Das and Laxmipriya, whom he later married, all helped not only in the evolution of himself as an artiste and guru but also in the development of Odissi dance. Later Kelucharan Mohapatra and Bhubaneswar Misra worked as a team, creating many new compositions and widening the Odissi dance repertoire.

The revival of Odissi dance featured as an integral part of the rise in national consciousness that spurred the independence movement. Scholars of Orissa felt the need to go back to their roots and the indigenous arts were encouraged with great enthusiasm. Very soon Odissi dance began to be taught in recognized institutions. Guru Pankaj Charan Das started teaching at Utkal Sangeet Samaj, Cuttack and Sangeet Parishad, Puri, Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra and Guru Mayadhar Rout at Kalavikash Kendra, Cuttack and Guru Debaprasad Das at the National Music Association. But as yet the Odissi dance style was in its nascent stage.

It was perhaps the observation of Rukmini Arunadale on seeing the Odissi performance of Laxmi Devi, wife of Kelucharan Mohapatra, which spurred the gurus, dancers and exponents to refine, polish and codify their ancient heritage and make it accepted

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by the world. Scholars and gurus who formed a group in 1957 which they named Jayantika worked hard to bring Odissi dance to its present shape. Each guru added his distinctive style, and the dance form was codified, uniformity being achieved in imparting training and in dance expositions. The relentless research of scholars such as Kalicharan Pattanaik and Dhirendra Nath Pattanaik added a significant dimension to the dance form.

The first performance of Odissi outside Orissa took place in 1954, at the first Inter University Youth Festival held at New Delhi. The dancers Priyambada Mohanty and Dhirendra Nath Pattanaik, who represented Utkal University, obtained the second prize.

The eminent scholar Mohan Khokar's special *Odissi* issue of the *Marg* contributed a great deal to the popularization of the dance form. But it was in the national festival and seminar on dance organized in 1964 at Hyderabad where Dhirendra Nath Pattanaik presented a paper, and Kelucharan Mohapatra, Mayadhar Rout, Ramani Ranjan Jena and Sanjukta Panigrahi demonstrated the dance, that Odissi received national acclaim.

Dr. Charles Fabri, the Dance Critic of *The Statesman*, was an admirer of Odissi and persuaded Indrani Rahman to learn it. Gradually a galaxy of dancers—Sanjukta Panigrahi, Yamini Krishnamurty, Kumkum Mohanty, Sonal Mansingh, Pratima Bedi, Madhavi Mudgal, Aloka Kanungo and many others—were presenting this style all over the world and within fifty years Odissi was hailed as one of the leading classical dance styles of India.

Today Odissi is being taught widely not only in Orissa but in major cities of India—in leading institutions and at Universities. Moreover, gurus and exponents have added to the glory of the style by composing dance-dramas and choreographic pieces where several dancers participate, their combined movements and stances adding to the dimension of the dance.

The path towards new choreographic experiments began with Pankaj Charan Das's *Pancha Kanya*. Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra's dramatization of Jayadeva's *Geeta Govinda* through exquisite dance, Deba Prasad Das's novel presentation *Manini* and the recent experiments being undertaken at the Orissa Research Centre at

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Bhubaneswar have contributed significantly to the charm and attraction of Odissi.

The late Sanjukta Panigrahi together with her husband Raghunath Panigrahi formed an unparalleled team, widening the popularity of Odissi with every performance.

Deba Prasad Das, nurtured in the Gotipua tradition also added significantly to the popularization of Odissi. His performances all over the world with his eminent pupil Indrani Rehman gave the dance form international recognition.

Sonal Mansingh created an entire repertoire of her own compositions based on the *Pala* tradition of Orissa and on Buddhist *Charia* poetry, Madhavi Mudgal has produced works like *Sohamasmi* and *Ganga to Mekong* and Sharmils Biswas has conceived a new production on the life of a Mahari. In recent times Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra has combined Chhau with Odissi in *Ekalavya* and Aloka Kanungo has combined Manipuri dance with Odissi in some of her recent productions.

The tradition continues, nurtured by gurus, dancers, patrons and scholars and today Odissi is among the major classical dance forms of India, performed and taught both in India and abroad.

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Resource Persons

Padmabhushan Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra, the foremost living guru and exponent of Odissi.

Guru Muralidhar Majhi, eminent guru and Senior Lecturer at Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata.

Aloka Kanungo, eminent exponent.

Other source material

Accessed all available websites on Odissi on the Internet.

Attended several workshops and stage performances on Odissi.

Studied video recordings of and brochures on Odissi dances, dance dramas and experimental productions.

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Meaning in the Visual Language of the Divine Dance: Iconology of the Dancing Images of Śiva in South Indian Temples

Introduction

Dance, like all arts in India, has been used as a mode of offering devotion to the Divine since ancient times, as a performative narrative of legends, rituals, emotive expressions and also for representing the heroic and divine figures' exploits and actions. Dancing on stage, as we know it today, has been a development of recent times. In contrast, the Indian tradition recognises the possibilities of a dance performance either with or without the presence of spectators. The most famous dancer in Hindu mythology is Śiva, who is portrayed as dancing in the cremation ground at dusk, besmearing himself with the ash of the burning pyre, wearing a tiger skin and a garland of skulls. It has been suggested that this image of Śiva goes back to the earliest times in history, correlating with the animistic practice of the wild possessed shaman dressed in skins and prancing in an uncoordinated manner.[1] Another image of Śiva is of dancing at dusk, while his consort, Pārvatī, watches the dance performance. Often, gods and other divinities constitute the audience. The concept of the dancing Śiva gradually helped to evolve the iconography and literature of what is called the Natarāja or the 'king of dance.' In this form, Śiva articulates a perfect mastery of movement formulated in the texts of classical dancing.[2] This dance is named the *Tāṇḍava* and

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is often interpreted as the cosmic dance of Śiva. Through this dance, he creates, sustains, destroys and regenerates the universe, thus controlling the cosmic cycle. While *Tāṇḍava* is a violent form of dance, his consort, the Goddess Pārvatī, dances in the *lāsya* mode, which is softer and perceived as feminine.[3] This categorization of the masculine divine power controlling the universe through a violent dance and the consort dancing in a softer mode produces a hierarchised imagery of the male and the female loci of the divine power. The only goddess who matches Siva's violent dancing capacity is Kālī, who abides outside the folds of the ordered society. Tamil popular legend, however, subdues even Kālī to Śiva in a dancing contest, according to which Kālī lost the contest and therefore, conceded the right to claim the devotees' worship to Śiva, accepting her exile from human settlements.

The theme of Śiva's dance and the associated legends have generated an extensive body of images in temple iconography, where Śiva is depicted as dancing, being watched by Goddess Pārvatī and other deities, of the Hindu pantheon. The fact that these images are carved on the temple walls automatically includes the viewer as part of the audience of Śiva's dance. These dancing images of Śiva are called *Nṛttamūrtis* in Sanskrit. This paper deals with three forms of these dancing images of Śiva, mostly from the peninsular India, covering a span of 8th–12th c. C.E. and dwells on the ways in which the dance of the deity creates equations of power and mediation of these equations through these sculptures.

Historiography and Concept

Before elaborating upon this theme, I would like to discuss in brief the nature of historiography that already exists in relation to the dancing images of Śiva. One of the earliest and amongst the most significant scholars to write about this theme was Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy in his famous work, *The Dance of Śiva*, in which he portrayed Śiva as the omnipotent god who controlled the cosmic cycle through his violent dance called the *Ānanda Tāṇḍava*.[4] It must be mentioned here that by doing so, he was really countering the

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European construction of the Indian culture as 'feminine' and therefore, 'passive'. Coomaraswamy's concerns, thus, went beyond the aim of studying the Indian art as he attempted to show through the image of a powerful, omnipotent deity that the Indian cultural signifiers were capable of presenting themselves as 'masculine' and 'forceful' as well. I use these terms in quotes, as this binary construction of the 'masculine' as 'dynamic' and the 'feminine' as 'passive' itself has undergone a change since the days of Coomaraswamy. Around the same time, T.A. Gopinath Rao presented an extensive survey of the Hindu images extant in the numerous rock-cut and structural temples and their possible relation with the Sanskrit texts.[5] This was essentially an attempt to bring awareness to the people—Indian and European—about the repository of iconographic heritage that existed in India. In this work he included the *Naṭarāja* images of Śiva from major sites. His work became a major source of reference of Hindu iconography and continues to be so. Much later, J.N. Banerjea followed his style of iconographic study in English in *The Development of the Hindu Iconography*[6] and Marutinandan Tiwari and Kamal Giri did so in Hindi in their *Madhyakalina Bharatiya Pratimalaksana.*[7] Stella Kramrisch attempted to show the spiritual strength of the Indian culture, as also the multiplicity of forms in which the Hindu society was capable of conceiving the divinity in visual and literary forms, using Śiva's imageries as a cultural signifier in her study of the Cave Temples of Ellora and Elephanta in the *Presence of Śiva* and also in *Manifestations of Śiva.*[8] Among the archaeological works, J.C. Harle made an extensive study of the temple gateways in South India, which among other images, use the motif of dancing images.[9] Douglas Barrett made an extensive survey of the evolution of the Naṭarāja image in South India, by studying the extant images from the numerous temple sites in the region.[10] His mainly archaeological and epigraphical approach was followed by Anne-Marie Gaston, who combined the archaeological evidences with the legends associated with Śiva in the various literary texts.[11] To this tradition may also be added T. Satyamurti's work on the Naṭarāja temple at Chidambaram, which combines the legends associated with the temple and the art and architecture.[12]

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B. Natarajan has compiled and published the various legends popular in South India, related to the dance of Śiva and associated with the Naṭarāja temple at Chidambaram. These legends have been mainly taken from the popular temple *māhātmyas*, which were written down in the mediaeval period, though they may have been in currency in the oral form earlier.[13] In a different key is the work edited by Fred Clothey and J. Bruce Long, which explores the various devotional, ritualistic and social aspects of the Saivite devotionalism in South India by emphasising the philosophical context of the *Śaiva Siddhānta* and other aspects of Śaivism.[14] A special mention needs to be made in this work of the essay by Jean Filliozat who dwells on the role of *Śaivāgamas* in the *Śaiva* ritual system.[15] In an attempt to provide a socioritualistic context to the icons, David Smith studies the dancing image of Śiva in the context of the socio-religious aspects of Śaivism during the later Chola and post-Chola periods.[16] On the other hand, Champakalakshmi adds a political dimension to the study of the dancing Śiva in the Tanjavur paintings, by correlating the divine image with the royal image of Rājarāja I, the royal patron of the temple.[17] The study of the dancing image of Śiva has thus traversed a long trajectory from being symbolic of the dynamism of Indian culture to being a signifier of the political power of its royal patron. As stated earlier, this paper deals with the concept of Śiva's dance as negotiating the equation between the dancer, the spectators and the devotees. Needless to say, these equations are located in the socio-cultural matrix in which they are formed. In this context, the observation made by Erin Striff is very important, who says that in performing arts, the performers themselves become the text to be read.[18] Although this is not a paper on performative arts, the iconology of a dance performance in visual arts too makes the dancer's image a visual—and cultural—text to be read and visualized by the spectators. Here, it must also be added that not only is the performer—or his image—a text to be read, but the performance itself may be visualised as a text to be read. At this point, some observations may be made regarding the term 'iconology'. This term has been used with multiple meanings in critical literary discourses. However, this paper intends it in the context of visual arts and hence,

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does not take into account the literary exployments of this term. The term 'iconology' is derived from ancient Greek and Latin roots and was used in 1593 by Cesare Ripa in his work titled *Iconologia.*[19] in the sense of the verbal descriptions of images taken from the antiquity and elsewhere.[20] By 1644, this term began to assume the overt meaning of an 'explanation of pictures, emblems and other hieroglyphic figures'.[21] Thereafter, throughout the 17th to 19th centuries, the connotation of iconology as the explanation of religious pictures provided a religious accent to the term, as in the *Iconologia Decorum* of Joachim von Sandrart (published in 1680), in which he dealt with the Greco-Roman and Christian images.[22] Erwin Panofsky in 1939 reinterpreted the term in his *Studies in Iconology.*[23] He believed that there were three levels of reading works of art—primary or natural, secondary or conventional and finally, intrinsic or symbolic—the last always lay in the cultural context. He applied iconography to the second level and iconology to the third, as these respectively required the techniques of analysis usually of visual symbols and synthesis, usually of the works of art in their cultural context. He never devised a word to describe the first level, during which the identification and correct naming of the elements had to occur.[24] I should stress that while my usage of the term iconology is taken over from Panofsky, I prefer to reinterpret this term for the purpose of my own specific research, as my usage of this term takes into account not only the second level of Panofsky, i.e., the analysis of the images in relation to their textual and archaeological sources, but also of their contextual study leading to their specific symbolic meanings.

Śiva *Nṛttamūrtis*—A Study

The first group of images elaborates the concept of Śiva as a dancer being watched by Pārvatī (or Umā), his consort. According to the legend, Śiva danced for her pleasure and all the gods accompanied him. This is called the *Sandhyānṛttya* or the evening dance of Śiva.[25] These images were greatly popular in pre-Chola period, i.e., in seventh–ninth century C.E. in both Deccan and south India. One of

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the finest of these images comes from the Ravula Phadi cave at Aihole in Karnataka, where Śiva is dancing in his eight-armed form alongwith Gaṇeśa, *Saptamātṛkās* etc. (Fig. 1). Pārvatī watches him from his left side. A more finely carved image of this form is found nearby outside the Badami cave I, where Śiva is sixteen armed and Gaṇeśa and other figures are accompanying him in dance. This image shows something striking—Śiva is wearing the Tamil warriors' anklet on the right leg (Fig. 2), which was worn as a sign of bravery in war in early Tamil society. Here, Śiva is depicted not only as the dancing god, but also as a warrior deity. The notion of dance as a source of pleasure and also as an act located in the context of war emerges through this image.

The motif of a consort 'watching' while the powerful god dances to 'please' her at once delineates the polar opposite roles for the two deities—the goddess is passive, yet needs to be propitiated while the god is powerful and is the cosmic actor in the act of dancing. The divine spectators watch this dance in adoration. The stage thus, defines the image of each participant—the dancer is the dynamic force, while the spectators legitimise this force through the action of 'gazing'; and the divine consort mediates between the two through her dual roles of a deity seeking propitiation and a member of the adoring audience.

The motif of the goddess watching the dance of Śiva has been exploited in another sculpture from the Tamil region. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* by Bharata refers to this dance pose as '*Lalāṭatilakam*' (i.e., the pose marking the forehead with the auspicious mark called '*tilaka*').[26] Scholars have mistakenly called it the '*Urdhva Tāṇḍava*' (or the *Tāṇḍava* dance with the lifted leg). Since Bharata gives a complete description of this pose, the term *Urdhva Tāṇḍava* seems to be a coinage of recent origins and therefore, a misnomer for the images datable to the 8th–12th c. C.E.

Lalaṭatilakam images show Śiva lifting his right leg straight upwards, parallel to his torso and one of his left arms goes up and the hand touches the crown. One of the right arms of Śiva winds his lifted leg and makes the *abhaya* gesture. Some of the earliest of these images are found at Kanchipuram (Fig. 3), while some of the later

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figures of this dance form are from Chidambaram (Fig. 4), the Śiva temple at Vellore in North Arcott District and Tribhuvanam, among others. In all the above images, Śiva is depicted alone and not with Kālī, as is mentioned in the Tamil popular legend described below.

Here, it is important to discuss the issue which is associated with these images. The reason why these images were thought to represent the *Urdhva Tāṇḍava* is that it has often been suggested that these images refer to the Tamil myth of the dance contest between Śiva and Kālī in which the right to command popular worship was decided by the efficiency at dance. Śiva defeated Kālī by lifting his leg during the contest. Though Kālī was capable of imitating the pose, she chose not to follow him, as it violated her feminine modesty and she did not want to transgress its norms. She was thereby exiled to the outskirts of the town and the temple was dedicated to Śiva's worship. This myth relates to Chidambaram and the Tiruvalankatu temples and is recorded in the temple texts called the *Sthalapurāṇa*, datable to the 14th–15th centuries C.E. and written to eulogise the sacred significance of the temples.[27]

There are however, problems in accepting this myth as the basis of the *Lalāṭatilakam* images. First, an extensive survey of these images from across south India reveals that almost none of the panels has Kālī in the defeated pose. A study of the Tamil texts of the 6th–12th centuries C.E. also reveals that while other legends related to Śiva's exploits are described in these texts, the legend of the contest occurs nowhere in them. It seems legitimate to expect that the woman saint Karaikkāl Ammaiyār's poetry would refer to this contest, if not other poets, since according to the legend, she was 'directed by Śiva' to stay at Tiruvalankatu and 'witness his dance' there. A study of her poems however, shows that though she has written on Śiva's various acts in her work called '*Atpūtat-Tiruvantāti*'[28], the legend of the dance context is conspicuous by its absence. When she writes about Śiva's dance which she 'witnessed', she says, "In forest the mysterious god is dancing, the daughter of the mountain king is in fear glancing."[29] It is significant that Kālī's contest with him is not mentioned and it is also significant that wherever Śiva is accompanied by the goddess in the panels mentioned above, it is Pārvatī watching him and not

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Kālī contesting him. The *Lalāṭatilakam* images thus, depict Śiva's dance being watched by Pārvatī, as is described by Karaikkāl Ammaiyār who was closer in time to these images than the *Sthalapurāṇas.*

Even a text as late as the *Perīya Purāṇam,* (i.e., 12th century C.E.) describes Śiva's dance at Tiruvalankatu as being watched by Karaikkāl Ammaiyār. Cekkilar, the composer of *Perīya Purāṇam,* describes the dance in these words—"Tiruvalankatu is the place, where our Father with his matted locks swinging, in all the eight directions, dances the fire dance to the delight of his limbs in the fiery cremation ground ...."[30] There is no reference to the contest here, nor is the presence of Kālī as a rival mentioned.

The myth of the contest as the basis of the *Lalāṭatilakam* images is refuted by the overwhelming evidence of the sculptural panels themselves. As said earlier, nowhere is this form of Śiva accompanied by a defeated Kālī. Either he dances alone, referring to the *Perīya Purāṇam* description mentioned above, or Pārvatī watches his dance, as described by Karaikkāl Ammaiyār. Besides, there is a profusion of sculptural panels which depict *female* dancers lifting their legs and touching their head with one foot, exactly like the Śiva images. It is interesting that Chidambaram, the other centre said to be associated with the dance contest, has the maximum number of these female-dancer panels (Figs. 5, 6 and 7). Also, the Chidambaram panel of *Lalāṭatilakam* shows Śiva dancing alone, not with Kālī. It is obvious that at least till the creation of Chidambaram temple gateways, there was no sense of immodesty associated with a woman lifting her leg, as the female dancers lifting their leg are depicted on the Chidambaram gateways. The myth was not only *not* associated with Śiva's images, it was unknown to the temple artists at Chidambaram and other places.[31]

In the above context, it is enlightening to read the legend of the dance of Śiva *and* Kālī as given in the *Linga Purāṇa,* a text of Śaivism:

"(After Kālī killed the demon Dāruka, in order to propitiate her anger, the delighted trident bearing lord of the *devas* performed the *Tāṇḍava* dance at dusk along with the ghosts and leaders of spirits...ẓ. After enjoying the dance of Śiva very much, the Goddess (i.e., Kālī)

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danced in the midst of ghosts happily along with her attendant *yoginīs*. Gods all around, including Brahmā, Indra and Viṣṇu, bowed to Kālī, eulogised her and then prayed to the Goddess. Thus, *Tāṇḍava* of the trident bearing lord has been briefly mentioned.)"[32]

This text accommodates various themes of the evening dance described in the opening part of this paper and makes the position of the various participants in the act of dance explicit. Kālī is the malevolent deity who really lies beyond the realm of the ordered society, living with the spirits in the cremation ground, feeding on flesh and blood and walking naked, wearing a garland of skulls. In a sense, she embodies the woman beyond the circumscriptive norms of the society. Here, she asserts her space on the dance stage by commanding propitiation from the god in the form of a dance performance and praise from the other gods. She expresses her contentment in the form of another dance performance by herself. In effect, she is not to be subdued by the great god's dynamic force. On the other hand, Śiva's consort, Pārvatī plays a passive role. She depicts the subdued spouse, living within the norms of the society.[33]

A remarkable feature in the beginning of the legend is that Śiva performed this dance in order to propitiate Kālī's anger. The accent here is on pleasing a companion and the element of conflict between the two divinities is not present. The Tamil popular legend however, changes the equation and uses the motif of contest to show the hierarchy of two deities, inverting the powerful image of Kālī and compelling her to acquire a subdued and defeated image. The *Linga Purāṇa* and the sculptured dance panels reflect the complexity of power equations between various divine figures, often delineating their actions according to their role in these power equations, their image not necessarily within the prescribed norms of the social order. The popular narrative however, uses the motif of dance to underline the gender equations between the male and the female figures along strictly hierarchised lines. This is a case of an idea flowing from the visual medium of the sculpture to the oral medium of the popular narrative in a transformed state and finally, the folk response getting encoded in the *Sthalapurāṇas* which were written in the mediaeval period.

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The above two groups of Śiva's *Nṛttamūrtis* (i.e., the dancing images of Śiva) thus, exploit the motif of the dance stage to define the placement of the participants through an elaboration of the theme of Śiva's dance at dusk viewed by Pārvatī. This idea was further evolved in the third group of sculptures of Śiva's dance, represented by the form commonly known as Naṭarāja (Fig. 8). To the narrative aspect was added the perception of Śiva as the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer of the universe through his dance (*Sṛṣṭi*, i.e., creation of the universe, *Sthiti*, i.e., preservation, *Saṁhāra*, i.e. destruction, *Tirobhava* i.e., dissolution and *Anugraha*, i.e. release to create afresh the universe being the five stages of this cycle). The image of Naṭarāja in this sense does more than merely narrate the dance event. It uses the dance to install Śiva as the supreme divine power—there is no longer a need for a trinity of gods,[34] since all the cosmic roles have been assigned to Śiva through the icon of Naṭarāja.

The 'Naṭarāja posture' is also called *Ānanda Tāṇḍava*, though Coomaraswamy[35] calls it *Nādānta* as opposed to the *Tāṇḍava* which Śiva performs in the cremation ground. In this paper, the term *Ānanda Tāṇḍava* has been used for the dance of Naṭarāja, as it is the common usage for this dance. The posture of Naṭarāja is not included in the 108 *Karaṇas*, i.e., poses of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Rather, it is a combination of various postures described in that text and the *Āgamas*. The hand postures called the *Gajahasta*, as described for four-armed images by the *Kāśyapaśilpam* of the *Anśumadbhedāgama* had already appeared at Badami and Pattadakkal in Karnataka and at Kanchipuram. To this were added the leg postures which appear in the 24th *Karaṇa* called *Bhujangatrāsa* of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Figs. 9, 10 and 11). These elements form the basic figure of Naṭarāja of the earliest phase. It was gradually perfected and elaborated through the 9th to the 12th centuries. Naṭarāja was one of the most important icons which received extensive royal patronage and acquired the status of a symbolic 'royal icon' in this period. A large body of myths, iconology and ritual grew around it, as it was the cultic image at Chidambaram, the most important Śiva shrine in South India and also one of the important royal centres of the Cholas.

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Since the ritual icon at Chidambaram is the Naṭarāja form of Śiva (apart from the *ākāśa linga* in the form of space), the mythology of this dancing form is also associated with the origin of this shrine. *Chidambara Māhātmya*, the text expounding the sacredness of this place, takes the origin of this shrine to great antiquity when the sacred centre contained only a *Śiva linga*, i.e., the aniconic, phallic form of Śiva which existed under a banyan tree beside a tank. Vyāghrapāda, the son of a sage living on the banks of the Ganga, travelled towards the south and saw this place. A bath in the tank and the divine form of the *linga* inspired him and he decided to practise penance in order to see the dance of Śiva called the *Ānanda Tāṇḍava*, (i.e., the 'dance of spiritual delight.' represented by the Naṭarāja image). As a reward for his severe penance, Śiva performed this dance in the forest, watched by his consort and other gods besides the awe-struck Vyāghrapāda. In the end. Śiva granted a boon to his spectators and they asked him to continue his dance at that place. Hence, the shrine became the hall of dance called the Chidambaram.[36]

Here again, the dance of spiritual delight which the Naṭarāja image represents, was watched by Śiva's consort and the gods. However, the consort recedes into oblivion in this legend. She has practically no role to play other than being a passive member of the audience. Apart from this, her image as a deity who commanded propitiation has been obliterated, just as the dominating presence and the powerful dance of Kālī has been obliterated. This complete accentuation of the authority of the god is reflected in the manner in which the dance performance takes place now—the devotee has to observe a severe penance to make the dance performance happen and the gods have to request Śiva to go on dancing in the Chidambaram hall for the benefit of the subsequent generations. This request itself is made possible only because Śiva grants a boon to the divine spectators.

From the nature of this legend, it is obvious that the dynamics of the divine dance changed drastically with the *Ānanda Tāṇḍava*, i.e., bliss. Now, it is not any longer god's will to please a companion, but rather, a statement that all power is reposed in god and all other

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power foci have become redundant. The image of Naṭarāja Śiva proclaims his supreme authority over other deities.

It was in Rājarāja I's time, towards the beginning of 11th century C.E., that the image of Naṭarāja attained the symbol of the 'royal icon', when it was placed on the Bṛadeśvara temple at Tanjavur in Tamil Nadu (Fig. 12). This image is more iconic than narrative and essentially projects Śiva as the supreme deity capable of controlling the cosmic cycle of creation, sustenance and destruction through his dance. It conveys the image of the divine sovereign who controls the cosmic realm, and allegorically, imparts this notion of absolute control to the persona of the king who caused this image to be created.

The Naṭarāja at Gangaikoṇḍacolapuram, the new capital built by Rājendra I, the son of Rājarāja I, is a more finely and elaborately carved conception of the dance of Śiva (Fig. 13). This image combines the symbolic meaning of Śiva's *Tāṇḍava* with various Puranic and Tamil narratives. The backwall of the niche shows Bhṛngī and Kālī dancing, the horizontal band below shows Karaikkāl Ammaiyār watching the dance, and Śiva's attendants accompanying on musical instruments. The wall left towards the niche shows a two-armed goddess, representing Pārvatī and the right wall shows his sons Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya on their mounts and a four-armed god with another eroded figure behind him, probably representing Brahmā and Viṣṇu, all witnessing the dance.

At one level, this is an elaborate depiction of the *Linga Purāṇa* narrative discussed earlier, which deals with Śiva's dance to please Kālī, watched by the divine figures. The two-armed goddess on the right wall outside the niche represents Pārvatī, who accommodates the earliest motif of a watching consort in the dance legend.

At another level, Tamil legends of Karaikkāl Ammaiyār's testimony of the god's dance and that of Bhṛngī being granted three legs by Śiva have been given a space in the panel.[37] The final level, of course, deals with the evolution of Naṭarāja as the creator, preserver, destroyer and the restorer of the universe. The subservient figures of Brahmā and Viṣṇu who watch these cosmic acts being performed through dance, underline Śiva's supremacy. This panel

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in this sense represents the effort of the royal patron to project a narrative—iconic image as the converging ground for the multiple layers of meanings associated with the icon and the narrative as construed by the society.

The dancing pose of *Ānanda Tāṇḍava* is not restricted to Śiva alone, but is also developed for Bhṛngī, who is said to have danced along with Śiva. The only difference is that the latter is accorded three legs, two out of which are bent and placed on the ground and the third (the left one) is lifted in the dancing pose (Fig. 14).

The above discussion shows that the *Tāṇḍava figures* of Śiva started with thematically simple compositions of a dancing Śiva watched by Pārvatī and gradually acquired more complex dance poses with an elaboration of the narrative elements. Finally, there evolved an iconologically distinct image which integrated into itself multiple layers of meaning. Though the concept of Naṭarāja may have arisen out of the imageries of the dancing Śiva, it is iconologically different from all other dancing images of Śiva. This is so not because it is just an image but it has become an integrative symbolic concept. It is not merely an image of the Puranic narrative of Śiva's dance. Rather, it combines the Puranic and Tamil legends and projects Śiva as the supreme divinity who controls time and space through his dance. Allegorically, it underlines the royal patron's control over his realm through his regal activity. The evolution of the dancing Bhṛngī may be interpreted as the devotee's/subject's acceptance of the divine/royal lord as the guiding force and the sovereign. The underlying current of the Naṭarāja icon is the attempt of the Cholas to take the existing theme of the dancing Śiva and to transform it into a converging ground for a multiple layered social perception and to project the image of the royal creator of this icon as the patron of all these multi-layered perceptions.

We have already referred to the *Linga Purāṇa* narrative of Śiva's dance as also the *Perīya Purāṇam's* and Karaikkāl Ammaiyār's versions. As for the iconographic textual references, it has been said earlier that out of the 108 *Karaṇas* (dance poses) of *Nāṭyaśātra*, several postures have been combined to form this image. With the growth of the institution of temples, evolved a body of literature called the

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āgamas which elaborately described the temple worship rituals, the philosophical expositions behind the worship and the injunctions for the construction of the temple and the image. One such *āgama* is the *Aṁśumadbhedāgama*, the iconographic section of which is called the *Kāsyapaśilpam*. This section has canonised nine out of the 108 dance poses of the *Tāṇḍava*. The first form of these is an elaborate iconographic and iconometric conceptualisation of the *Ānanda Tāṇḍava Naṭarāja* which sets down the most characteristic features of this icon in a standardised fashion.[38] The image however, never stops evolving, as we have seen in the survey above. Accommodations, refinements, deletions and additions keep on taking place throughout the Chola period in both iconographic and narrative terms.

Coinciding with the last phase of the Chola rule was the rising kingdom of the Hoysalas in the lower Deccan, who rose to power and successfuly waged wars against the Cholas.[39] It is interesting to see how they employed the dancing images of Śiva in one of their most prominent temples at present day Halebid, which was their capital centre called Dvārasamudra. This temple has several icons of the dancing Śiva carved in very ornate high relief in various parts of the temple. Just as the Cholas developed the Naṭarāja icon to express an idea of a dominant divine sovereign, the Hoysalas drew their visual idiom of the dancing Śiva images from the *Sandhyānṛttyamūrtti*, but modified its elements to express the powerful image of the dancing deity. A look at some of these images shows that the motif of the watching or dancing consort has been excluded from these images (Figs. 16 and 17). At the same time, Śiva's attendants keep the dance and musical beats for him, facilitating his dance. The other two major deities of the Hindu pantheon viz., Brahmā and Viṣṇu, are carved as minor divinities in diminutive forms flanking him (Figs. 18 and 19). The entire composition presents the dancing Śiva as a powerful deity who subordinates other figures. At the same time, these icons show an attempt by the Hoysalas to reject the idiom of their rivals, the Cholas, and develop their own visual language to express this idea of a powerful dancing deity. The Hoysala sculpture also attempts to employ the visual motif of dance to narrate a legend associated with

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Śiva, though the literary version of the legend doesn't employ the motif of dance. A very fine example of this is the *Gajāntaka* Śiva icon at Halebid. According to this legend, Śiva killed an elephant and used its hide to wrap around himself. At Halebid, this narrative has been transformed to show Śiva in the dancing form, in which he tears off the elephant hide to envelope himself with it (Fig. 15). Dance here becomes a visual language to express the idea of battle, killing of the rival and victory of the dancing deity. This visual language narrates the legend with the help of some motifs which are not present in the text. While the Cholas use a dancing image to express their notion of power through the dance poses, the Hoysalas use the visual composition and narrative elements to express the same idea. The visual language thus, changes according to the tastes of those who use it in different situations.

The dancing icons discussed here expound the image of a powerful deity, who continuously defines his equation with his divine associates and devotees and who finally emerges as the sole controller of the universe. The motif of dance underlines these statements through the visual form. This is supported by the body of texts, circulated through the generations in both literary and oral media. This circulation serves to transfix the power equations delineated by the image in the popular minds.

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him—Saraswati the goddess of learning plays on the Vina, Indra the king of gods on the flute, Brahma the creator holds the time marking cymbals, Lakshmi the goddess of fortune begins a song, Vishnu plays on a drum and all the gods stand round about;" quoted by A.K. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Siva*, The Sunwise Turn, Inc, New York, 1924 (Published 1918), pp. 55–56.

26. Bharata's *Natyasastra* describes at least two poses which agree with the images being discussed here. Out of a total of 108 *karanas* or poses, the 50th *karana* named '*Lalatatilakam*' says that the leg should be lifted up and the great toe of that foot should touch the forehead as if marking a '*tilaka.*' The dancer often also touches his forehead with his palm to suggest that this is the *Lalatatilakam* pose. The 64th *karana* called *Nisumbhita* says the leg is lifted, the chest is elevated and the palm is placed in the *tilaka* pose. The images illustrated above have originated from these two *karanas*. See Venkata Narayana Swami et al., *Tandavalaksanam*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1991; 1st Ed. 1936, p. 98, verses 111 and 125.
27. David Smith feels that though *Chidambara Mahatmya* is a 12th century text, its final version is datable to Umapati Shivacharya's time, i.e., around 14th century C.E., as he wrote the *Kunchitanghristara* around 1300 C.E. According to David Smith, *Vyaghrapura Mahatmya Sthalapurana* is still later than the *Chidambara Mahatmya*, which devotes a chapter on the dance contest between Shiva and Kali. The Tamil version of the *Chidambara Mahatmya* is the *Koil Purana* attributed to Umapati Shivacharya. See Smith, 8–9; 44–45.
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31. I am grateful to Late Dr. F.L. Hernault, Director, Ecole Francaise d' Extreme-Orient, Pondicherry and Late Mr. N. Sethuraman, Director, Raman and Raman Co, Kumbhakonam who cross-examined my argument and endorsed that I was following the right track of analysis. Mr. Sethuraman also pointed out that classical daners as far as he knew, did not subscribe to the concept of 'immodesty' associated with this pose.
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34. Traditionally in the Hindu mythology, Brahma is the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Shiva the destroyer of the universe.
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36. From the *Chidambaram Mahatmya* as quoted by T. Satyamurti, *The Nataraja Temple—History, Art and Architecture*, Classical publication, New Delhi, 1978; also see David Smith, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 31–45.
37. According to the legend, Bhringi was a devotee who became emaciated during his penance to witness the dance of Shiva. He was granted an extra leg by Parvati to support himself.
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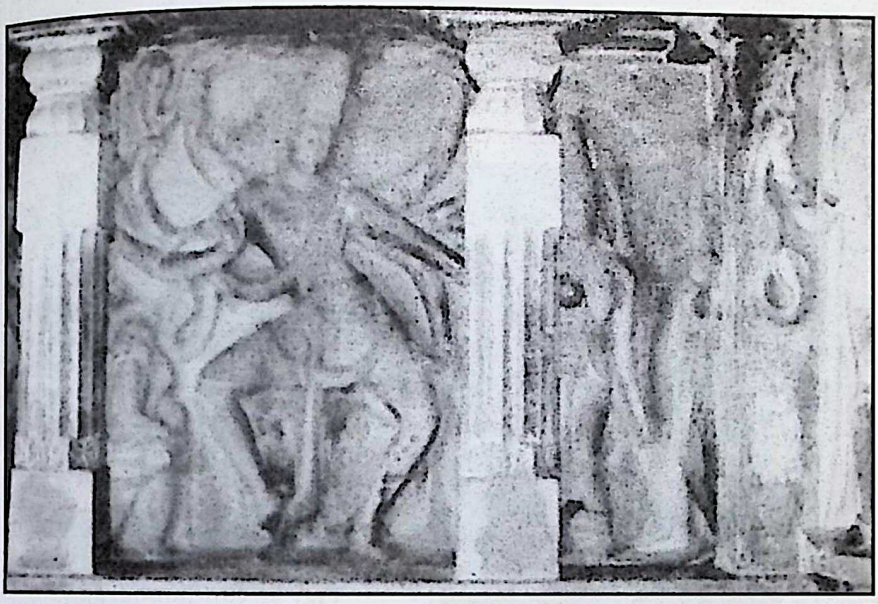

Fig. 1. *Sandhyanṛttya*, Aihole 7th Century

Fig. 2. Badami 7th Century

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Fig. 3. *Lalāṭatilakam*
Kanchipuram 8th Century

Fig. 4. Chidambaram,
13th Century

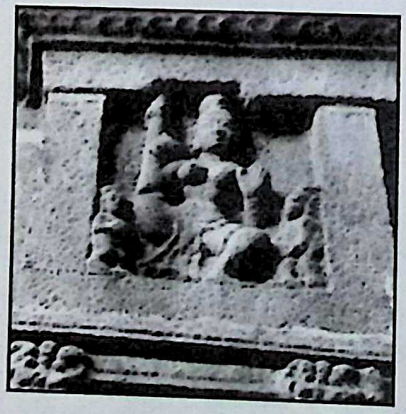

Fig. 5 & 6. Female dancers, Chidambaram, 13th Century

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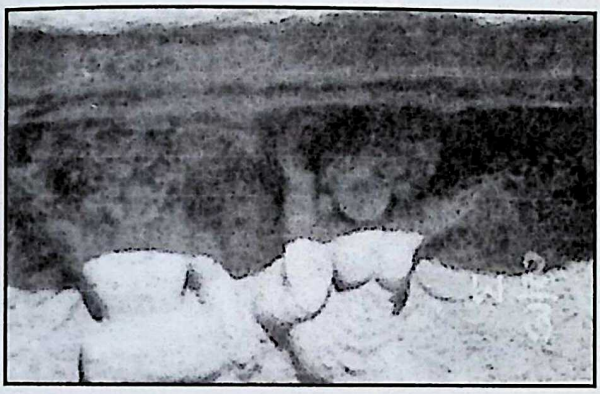

Fig. 7. Female dancer, Darasuram
12th Century

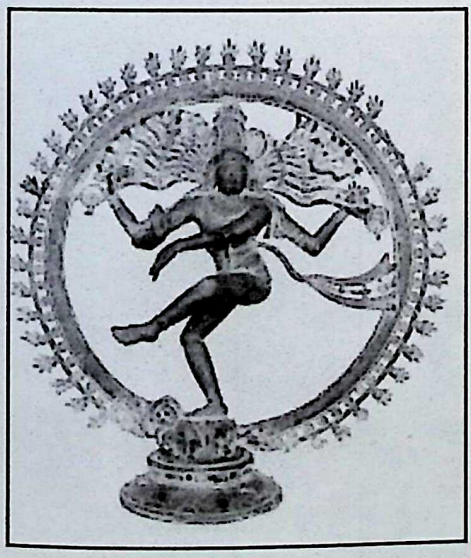

Fig. 8. Naṭarāja, Kivalur
12th Century

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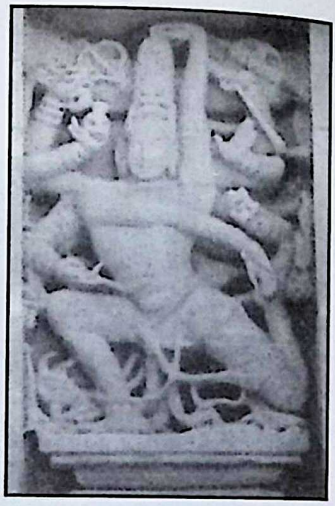

Figs. 9 and 10. *Gajahasta* pose, Aihole and Kanchipuram 8th Century

Fig. 11. *Bhujangatrāsa,* Kuram 9th Century

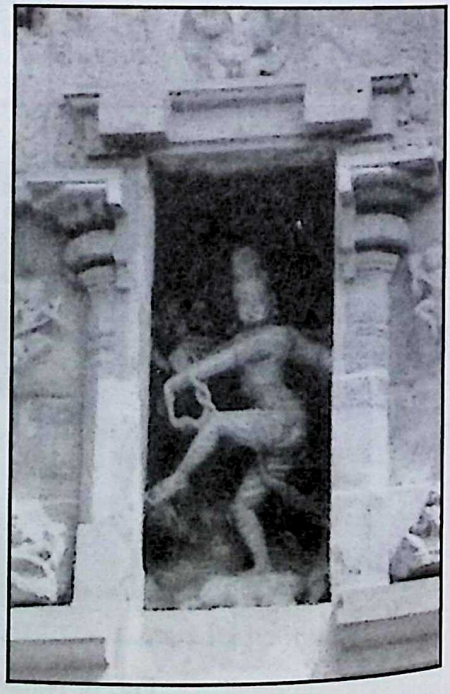

Fig. 12. *Naṭarāja,* Tanjavur, 11th Century

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Fig. 13.
Gangaikoṇḍacolapuram
11th Century

Fig. 14. Bhṛngī,
Tanjavur, 11th Century

Fig. 15. *Gajāntaka*, Halebid
12th Century

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Fig. 16. *Nṛttamūrti*, Halebid
12th Century

Fig. 17. *Śiva Nṛttamūrti*, Halebid
12th Century

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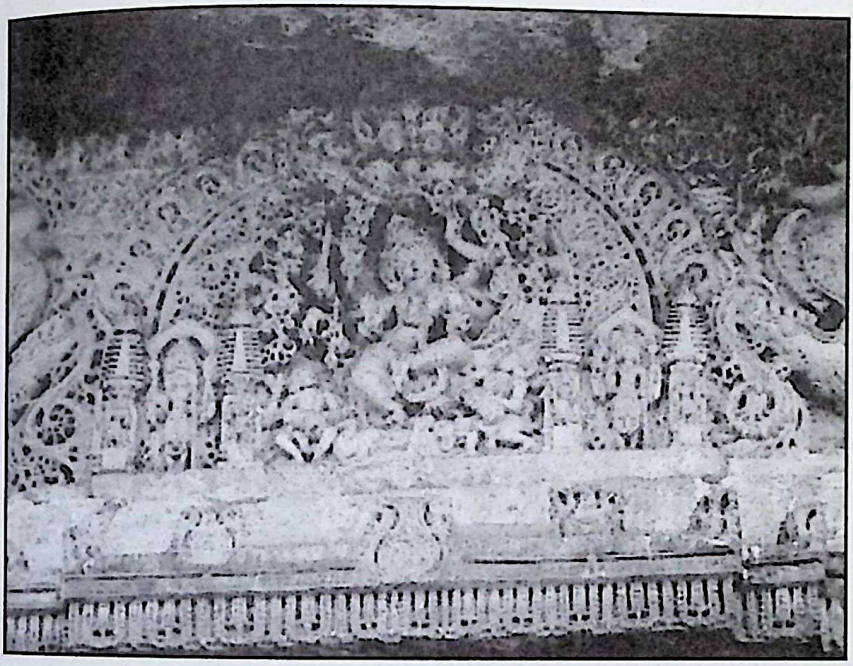

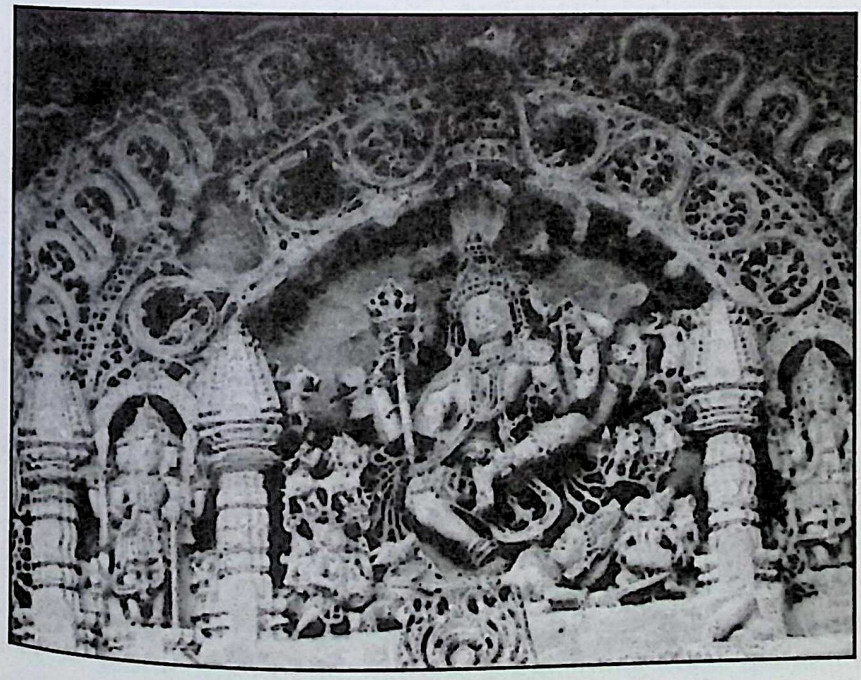

Fig. 18 and 19. Śiva *Nṛttamūrti*, Halebid 12th Century

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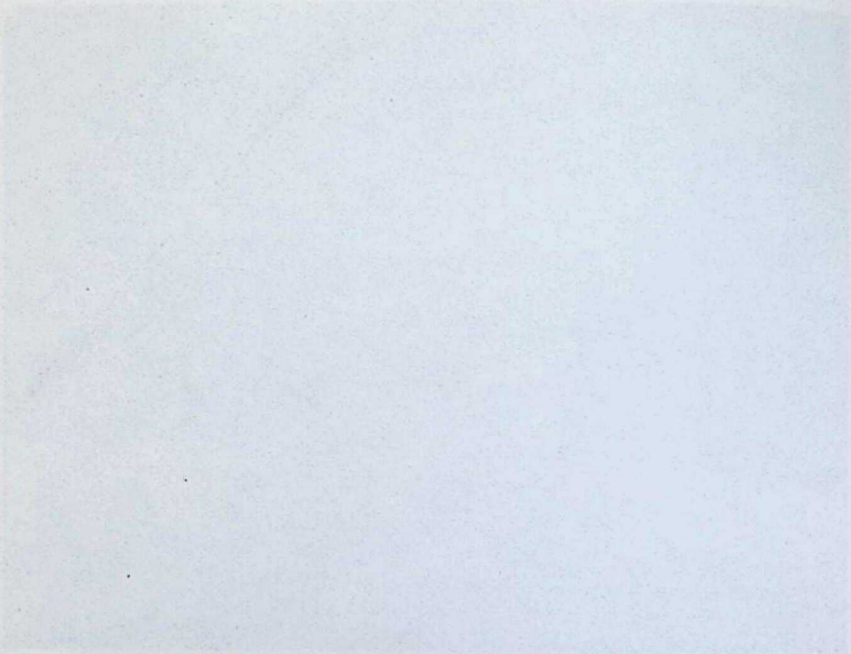

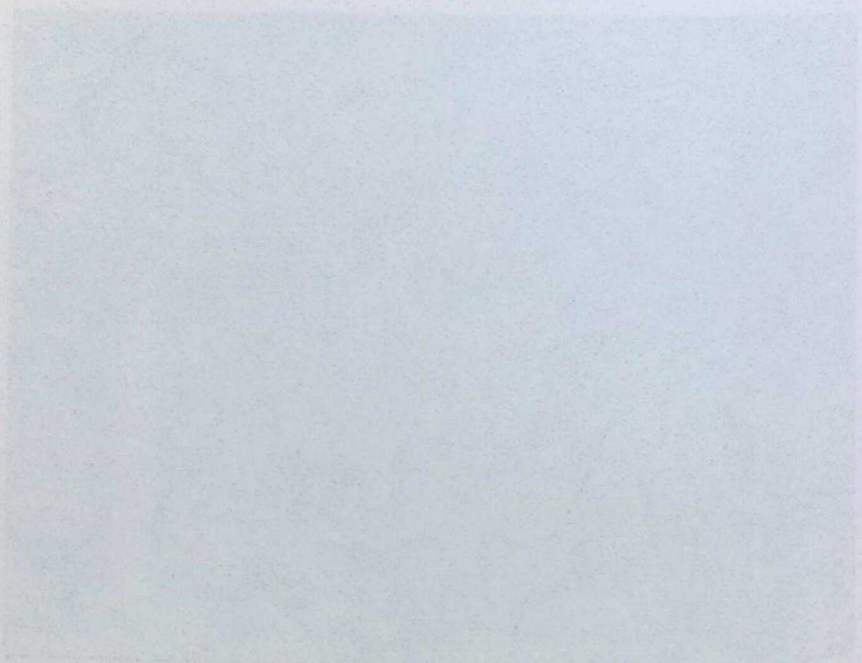

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R.C. Pradhan

Are There Objective Moral Values? Considerations Towards a Theory of Moral Objectivity

In this paper an attempt will be made to argue against moral subjectivism which holds that moral values have a subjective origin and so have no objective existence independent of the human mind. It is argued by the moral subjectivists that moral values and qualities are not part of the "fabric of the world"[1] and are at best the subjective attitudes and sentiments that are ascribed to the world without objective foundation in reality.

Moral subjectivism widely assumes that moral relativism is true and thus it presupposes that values in the limited subjective sense are relative to persons and societies. A moral subjectivist is also a moral relativist in view of the fact that subjective moral values are relative to those whose values they are. Therefore one consequence of moral relativism and also of moral subjectivism is that there are not only no objective values, but also there are no absolute and universal values.

My effort here is twofold: first, to show that moral subjectivism and relativism are based on wrong assumptions regarding morality and moral values, and second, to argue for the objectivity of moral values by showing that the subjectivist theory of morality leads to moral scepticism because it undermines the foundations of morality. In this connection, I will discuss the Indian concept of *Dharma* to show that the moral order of the universe is something which is absolute and is therefore binding on all rational human beings.

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1. Moral Relativism and Subjectivism

Moral relativism holds that moral values arise from the social practices and so are culture-bound. That is, it is the social practices of the people which are supposed to be the source of the values and their legitimacy in a particular society. Since cultures and societies differ from one another, there is no one system of values applicable everywhere, according to the moral relativists. Culture-variance leads inevitably, according to this view, to variance in moral values and the value preferences of the people concerned. Moral relativism, it is argued, thus follows as a matter of empirical fact due to the massive variability in cultural ethos and social practices. It is therefore claimed by the relativists that what is morally good in one society is not so in another. On this ground they argue that any moral system is as good as another. Hence, anything goes in morality.[2]

Moral values, for the relativists, are such that they are embedded in the life-forms of people and so are subject to the contingency of time and history. They are the creations of the social and cultural history and so are contingent in character. That is, according to this view, moral values have a history of their own and have an origin at some point of time, and so in course of time they pass into history giving place to new values. This historical account of values goes alongside the study of the social and cultural history of the human beings. From this account the following conclusions are likely to follow:

(a) Moral values have a contingent character and so are subject to change.
(b) Moral values have no absolute and objective status, since they are relative to the culture and society in which they have their origin.
(c) One moral system is as good as another because there is nothing to choose between the two.

The idea of the contingency of values follows inevitably from the idea that moral values have a historical origin. Because of the historical origin, they lack any necessity[3] about them, being subject to change and social manipulation. Had the values been necessary, they would have been above time and history as all necessary things are. By this fact of contingency, however, values lose their claim to

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the absolute and objective character[4] since they are necessarily pushed into the social and cultural matrix thus leaving them relative to the historical context in which they appear.

J.L. Mackie[5], while arguing for the subjectivity of values, holds that moral values have no claim to objectivity because of the fact that such values have no origin in anything other than the social life of the people. The so-called objectivity of the values is easily dismantled by him by exposing their relative character by systematic analysis. The *argument from relativity* provided by Mackie against objectivity is as follows:

> The argument from relativity has as its premise the well-known variation of moral codes from one society to another and from one period to another, and also the differences in moral beliefs between different groups and classes within a complex community[6].

The argument from relativity scores a point over the argument for objectivity by showing that if there would have been objective values, they would have been invariable across societies and cultures and thus would have staked claim for an absolute and objective status. Mackie does not yield any absolute and objective status to the values for the reasons he unfolds in his *argument from queerness* which runs as follows:

> Even more important, however, and certainly more generally applicable, is the argument from queerness. This has two parts, one metaphysical, the other epistemological. If there were objective values, then they would be entities or qualities or relations of very strange sort, utterly different from anything else in the universe. Correspondingly, if we were aware of them, it would have to be by some special faculty of moral perception or intuition, utterly different from our ordinary ways of knowing everything else[7].

Thus Mackie casts doubt over the objectivity of values by showing that values, if objective, would look queer and strange from a metaphysical and epistemological point of view. Such queer entities

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have no place in the scheme of our universe because there is no way we can make room for them in the universe.

Both these arguments prove that values are not objective and so are, ontologically speaking, subjective in character. They indirectly support the view that values are relative to the different social and cultural groups.

II. The Second-order Subjectivism

Mackie pleads for a second-order subjectivism regarding moral values, though he thinks that values appear to have objectivity so far as the first-order moral discourse is concerned. Values have no objectivity precisely because they are not entities of any sort to be accorded an ontological status. Txhe first-order discourse appears to be committed to the objectivity of values because of the fact that the first-order moral thinking takes the values on their face value. The second-order reflections alone raise the questions regarding the ontological status of values and find that there are no such objective values in the world.

Mackie's concern is to reject the idea of objectivity of values based on, as already explained, the arguments from relativity and queerness. Values have a tendency to be objectified in order to be accommodated within the first-order discourse. However, according to Mackie, the first-order discourse itself is immune to the second-order sceptical doubts. It is only the second-order discourse that faces the issue of moral objectivity squarely thus denying the objectivity of values for lack of empirical evidence. The so-called objective values prove to be illusory, so the argument goes, as they are based on an error[8] rather than on any evidential basis within our empirical repertoire. Mackie insists that the values we are referring to in the first-order discourse are not ontologically real and so cannot be called objective at all. He argues:

> ... What I am discussing is a second-order view, a view about the status of moral values and the nature of moral valuing, about where and how they fit into the world. These first-and second-order views are not merely distinct but completely independent: one could be a

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second-order moral sceptic without being a first-order one, or again the other way round[9].

Besides, for Mackie, the second-order scepticism, regarding the objective values is an ontological thesis and not a conceptual one. It is because he is not concerned with the meaning of the value-judgments which is a matter of conceptual analysis. The ontological issues are independent of the conceptual issues regarding the status of the moral judgments.

However, the attack on objectivism at the second-order thinking does not deny objective ethics its first-order status. That is the reason why Mackie takes the debate to the second-order discourse and makes a cautious move to do away with ontological objectivism. The difficulty with Mackie's strategy is that it takes a narrow view of ontology which admits only entities or properties which are perceptible or at best given in experience. This narrow view of ontology makes him sceptical about the objective values. Such a view of the ontology of values is, however, not warranted for justifying objective morality in our common moral thinking. Thomas Nagel writes:

> The view that values are real is not the view that they are real occult entities or properties, but that they are real *values:* that our claims about value and about what people have reason to do may be *true or false* independently of our beliefs and inclinations. No *other* kinds of truths are involved. Indeed no other kinds of truths *could* imply the reality of values[10].

The real problem in justifying objective morality is not the assumption of the reality of values as "queer" entities, but the very foundation of moral thinking concerning the moral values. Objective moral thinking about values will not be possible if there were no values as real which are objectively available to all moral thinkers. Mackie goes too far in doubting the objectivity of values because of his empiricist commitments to objects which are given only in sense-experience. Values are necessarily not objects of empirical inspection, though they are available for all rational thinking.

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What matters to an objectivist in ethics is the need for a point of view outside one's subjective reasons and preferences. If ethics collapses into subjective preferences, then there will be nothing to justify morality as an objective discourse. Values are not real in the way cows and cats are real; they are real as a matter of being objects of moral thinking. Values are real in the moral discourse just as numbers and geometrical points are real in mathematics. If this is the case, then objectivity of moral values is not threatened by the second-order error theory espoused by Mackie, because it does not make any difference to our objective moral discourse.

III. Error in the "Error Theory"

All subjectivist theories which denounce moral objectivism owe us an explanation as to how moral discourse goes wrong in referring to moral values. Can there be a moral discourse without values to be talked about? Can the values be ultimately subjective preferences? The answer to these questions could be in the negative if we think that the moral discourse is packed with reference to values as objective ideals to be pursued by the human agents. This reference to values cannot be all false, since in that case the ideal of pursuing moral values will be illusory. If there are no values, what shall we pursue in moral life? The error theory dismisses these anxieties by arguing that it is only a second-order proposal and has no implication regarding the first-order value-discourse as such. But the fact of the matter is: if we do not admit values as objective at the second-order discourse, do we have any right to talk about them in the first-order discourse? That is, can we be objectivist only at the first-order discourse without being so at the second-order discourse? This poses an unnecessary dualism without meaning much. Hence a robust objectivism in the sense of accepting real values even at the second-order discourse seems to be the better option

Our moral judgments are not false because we do ascribe moral properties to human actions which come out true in most of the cases. We do evaluate the moral agents' actions and motives according to the moral standards we have accepted. That is, there is a genuine

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objective way of thinking so far as our evaluative judgments are concerned and we are in need of objective standards for this purpose. Therefore we need a discourse in which we have enough objective reasons to talks about values. If that is so, then we are secure against all errors in our value-judgments so far as we have agreement[11] amongst all rational agents who subscribe to that moral standard. Our value-judgments are true if there are public criteria for making them and justifying them. They are not true the way the factual judgments are, but they can be called true within the moral discourse.

The moral sceptic or the subjectivist has to show that we can never be right in our value-judgments and that we all suffer from an illusion regarding the values. This argument always falls back on the point that values are not part of "fabric of the world"[12] and so we cannot be right in talking about them because they are non-existent. This argument is based on a wrong understanding of the nature of values. Nobody has argued that moral values are part of the fabric of the world the way the stones and pebbles are. There are many ways of understanding values as real without committing oneself to the objectivity of values in the queer metaphysical sense. There are modest ways of arguing that values are ideal entities belonging to a different order of existence[13]. In that sense they are objectively real without being part of the physical world. We have to keep in mind the idea that ideal entities also have an ontology of their own.

Morality is a discourse about the value entities which claim to be real in the intended sense of the term. Objectivists have a point in saying that to take away objectivity from moral values is to invite subjectivism of all sorts, not the second-order sort only. This will entail the collapse of morality as such as a normative discourse. The comparison of moral properties with secondary properties in Locke's sense is without much avail, as shown by Blackburn[14], for moral properties are not secondary to some other properties. Moral properties are the only properties of the kind ascribable to the objects in the world. Goodness or rightness is not subservient to another set of properties which are either natural or primary properties. Even their supervenience[15] (in Hare's sense) on natural properties does not reduce them to secondary properties. Supervenience does not

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stand for reduction of moral properties to natural properties. It only suggests that moral properties are nested along with the natural properties, without being completely separable from the latter.

IV. Moral Necessity and the Ontology of *Dharma*

The dilemma of moral subjectivism and relativism is resolved if we look into the nature of morality from a deontological point of view. Especially, the Indian concept of *Dharma* can provide a solution to this dilemma along with that of Kant's because of the introduction of the concept of moral necessity into the moral discourse by these theories. Deontology in ethics brings into focus the idea that moral goodness and rightness are intrinsic to the human actions provided they are in conformity with the moral law that stands apart from the human desires and preferences. Human desires and sentiments have a human and subjective origin and therefore are bound to be subjective and relative.

The idea of moral necessity is associated with the idea of moral law which is imposed by reason according to Kant. In Kant's deontology, there is room for the imposition of the moral law[16] by the moral will which is universal and transcendental in nature. The moral law cannot be based on the sentiments of the people, nor can it be designed by the society. That makes the law semi-divine in origin and thus has the authority of guiding the human actions. Deontological ethics is known for its idea of duty which consists in acting in accordance with the moral maxims which are universalizable. Moral maxims are universalizable in principle because they are applicable to all rational human beings in similar situations. Universalizability is the hallmark of Kant's categorical imperative which is of the nature of the moral law.

The Indian concept of *Dharma* has a similar deontological character in view of the fact that *Dharma* is universal and necessary and has a semi-divine status. It is the cosmic principle *(ṛta)* regulating the world-order at the metaphysical level. It is also the moral law regulating human life. Thus *Dharma* is both a metaphysical and a moral law. As a moral law, it is the foundation of all moral actions.

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Dharma justifies morality as a necessary form of life wedded to realizing the fourfold values called *purusharthas*[18] as laid down in Indian Ethics. Morality is not mere self-seeking, nor is it a fulfillment of desires. In fact, desires stand on the way to morality because they are responsible for the moral degeneration of the individual human life. *Purusharthas* themselves are not facts of desires but are the ends to be pursued which include the fulfillment of desires as well. However, it is *Dharma* that supersedes the desires and their fulfillment and so there is an element of moral necessity within the scheme of the fourfold ends of life. The Indian moral thinkers have a holistic view life in mind when they take *Dharma* to be associated with *Moksa* which is the liberation from all concerns including the moral concerns. Morality is itself a stepping stone to the higher spiritual goal of life. However, the practice of morality is not secondary to spiritual realization; it is an indispensable step towards the realization of spiritual freedom.

Indian ethics in general sets a spiritual goal for life as it is incumbent on the moral agents to transcend the mundane life for a higher goal. Morality is not complete unless it leads to its transcendence. This fact has to be kept in mind while dealing with the justification of ethics. Subjective justification is ruled out because moral concerns are universal and are binding on man. *Dharma* is not a matter of choice because it is imposed on man because of his own nature as a value-seeking being. The obligatory nature of the *dharmic* law[19] is evident to the discerning mind in view of the fact that man in himself or herself is an embodiment of the cosmic principle called the *Atman.*

Given the above framework, it follows that morality based on *Dharma* is completely free from all elements of subjectivity and relativity, since the very fact of subjectivity is countered by the law-like nature of *Dharma. Dharma* is the universal principle that prescribes the human actions as good and right under all rationally controlled situations. Human desires or sentiments are all subservient to the moral law in view of the fact that the moral law controls them. Even the passions have a place in life provided they are controlled by the *Dharma*-prescribed maxims. *Dharma* has a far

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reaching grip over life because even the mundane actions have an anchoring in it. Thus in the pan-*Dharmic* life, there is no possibility for a moral holiday. It is a compact form of morality that allows freedom but rules out all license.

V. Why Values Must be Part of the "Fabric of the World"

The idea that there must be values for morality to be possible is universally accepted. But whether values must be objective or not is a matter of debate among the subjectivists and the objectivists. It is logically true that all value-judgments in order to carry authority must not be arbitrary and based on subjective opinions and tastes. If this much is conceded, then it must be admitted that there must be values to be referred to and also practiced in life. Values are, to say the least, action-guiding and so must have a place in our life. From this also one can infer that values cannot be merely ideas in our mind or merely our preferences. Therefore there is every reason to believe that values are objective in the sense that they have to be practiced in a moral community. That is, they have to be objectively real in the world. They are in that sense part of the "fabric of the world". This idea of values being part of the fabric of the world is not unusual because it does suggest that the world cannot be value-free if it has to be the home of moral life itself. When we ascribe value to an object or person, it is the person or object which has the value and so the value is part of that thing. If an action is good or valuable, then it has the value ascribed to it. So values being part of the fabric of the world is not an offensive idea and does not evoke the image of something queer and strange.

Dharma in Indian ethics is precisely a part of the fabric of the world. It is supposed to be the very foundation of the world. In this sense it is part of the world without being produced by the world. In fact, the world presupposes *Dharma* as its basis. From this point of view, the moral order is very much ingrained in the world itself. The world cannot be what it is without being morally governed or normatively structured. The moral order is all pervasive in the world-order. This gives rise to the idea that, though fact and value are distinct, they do not belong to different realms. Values and facts are nested together

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in that facts have a moral structure contributed by the values. On the other hand, the moral values themselves need a foothold in the factual world itself. Thus the fact-value dichotomy, though valid, does not imply that values are strangers to the facts themselves.

The value-laden character of the facts is itself a reminder of the idea that facts are not enough to make the world-order. The values provide the framework within which the facts have to be posited. From this point of view, it is reasonable to say that values penetrate the world from outside as the values are not facts themselves, as Wittgenstein[21] has argued. Values have a transcendental[22] origin because of the fact that they are not factual in character. What is implied by this is that morality cannot accommodate values as empirical objects in the world. Values, though transcendental, constitute the ground on which the world stands.

It can be argued that the realm of values is so structured that we have to make them pertinent to the world. For example, kindness as a value is applicable to the human actions. It is actions that are kind and not events. So also cruelty as a disvalue is pertinent to human actions. In this sense every value is a value ingrained in the world. The value of an action is a *sui generis* property of an action which cannot be taken away from it.

VI. Ontology in Ethics

It is to be admitted that ethics cannot be taken as ontology-free *contra* Hare's[23] argument. Hare argues that all questions of ethics are questions of logic in that we are required to analyze the language of ethics and not its ontology, He writes:

> It is thus entirely possible to arrive rationally at a moral conclusion even though that conclusion is not a statement of fact about what is the case in *rerum natura*. Ethical rationalism does not, therefore, entail ethical realism[24].

But how can there be logic of moral language without ontology? To talk about the meaning of the terms in the moral language is to

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introduce moral objects into the discourse. It is the demand of logic that we must be clear about what we are talking about. Moral talk is about things that are moral. And so there cannot be only moral talk without anything being moral. The subjectivists and the relativists argue that the moral things are all sentimental projections on the world and so there is no objective basis of what we say regarding the things moral and valuable.

Hare's prescriptivist argument avoids ontology at a great cost because what is prescriptive is at best only social and rational but there is no reason given as to why it is prescriptive. Thus we are bound to be ontological in our approach to ethics. Ethics is the domain of the values which are morally placed in the world. They are not factually or scientifically placed there. They are ontologically warranted and stationed in the moral space. Ontological commitments are part of ethics, since ethics is about the world as much as logic is. Like logic, ethics can pretend to be indifferent to the world, but in fact what happens in the world has an inescapable moral dimension. The world itself demands that there be values which are morally necessary.

The moral sceptics cannot succeed in denouncing the value-structure of the world because by doing so they deny the very idea of a moral life. Moral life demands that values have their source in the human reason but they spread into the world and make the world their own home. Values meet the world as much as the world meets the values.

That ontology is involved in ethics is conceded by the fact that we take morality as a serious business of life. Without the ontological support morality may look arbitrary and contingent. However, it is the objectivist ontology that makes a good case for morality. Hence subjectivism and relativism must be set aside for the sake of serious ethics.[25]

Notes and References

1. See J.L. Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1977), Chapter I.

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2. See Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) for discussion on relativism. See also Gilbert Harman and Judith J. Thomson, *Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1996).
3. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), 6.41.
4. See J.L. Mackie, op.cit, Chapter 1.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 36.
7. Ibid., p. 38.
8. Ibid., p. 35.
9. Ibid., p. 16.
10. Thomas Nagel, "Value" in *Ethical Theory I: The Question of Objectivity,* ed. James Rachels (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 122.
11. Cf. David Gauthier "Why Contractarianism?" in *Ethical Theory I: The Question of Objectivity,* pp. 92–108.
12. Mackie, op.cit.
13. Cf. R.M. Hare, "Ontology in Ethics" in *Morality and Objectivity,* ed. Ted Honderich (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), pp. 39–53.
14. Cf. Simon Blackburn, "Error and the Phenomenology of Values" in *Morality and Objectivity,* pp. 1–22.
15. Hare, op.cit.
16. Kant, *The Moral Law: The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* trans. H.J. Paton (London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1948; Reprinted 1976).
17. Ibid.
18. See Rajendra Prasad, "The Theory of Purusharthas: Revaluation and Reconstruction" in *Karma, Causation and Retributive Morality: Conceptual Essays in Ethics and Metaethics* (New Delhi: ICPR, 1989), pp. 275–305.
19. See G.C. Pande, *The Meaning and Process of Culture: As Philosophy of History* (Allahabad: Raka Prakashan, 199), pp. 91–92. See also M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1932; Seventh Impression, 1968), pp. 109–110.

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20. See Bernard Williams "Ethics and the Fabric of the World" in *Ethical Theory I: The Question of Objectivity,* pp. 169-179.
21. Wittgenstein, op.cit, 6.41.
22. Ibid., 6.421
23. Hare, op.cit.
24. Ibid., p.49.
25. An earlier version of the paper was presented at the American Philosophical Association (APA), Pacific Division, Conference at San Francisco, California in April, 2007 in the section: "Philosophy in India: Metaethics" under the chairmanship of Professor Arthur Falk. I am thankful to the Chairman and the commentators who had taken care to read the text and had suggested improvement.

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DISCUSSION

Rajakishore Nath

Tradition, Modernity and the Future of Civilization

Tradition and modernity are important factors of human existence and development in terms of both material and non-material aspects. As we know, man is the architect of his own culture and tradition. He is also the maker and breaker of tradition. Tradition helps man in his selective behaviour. The human world and civilization are realized only through the help of tradition. The maintenance of tradition is the assertion of this judgement. Thus, tradition thrives in, and in turn, constitutes the activity and the creative aspects of men. Nationalism develops largely around a common tradition. Therefore, our entire social life is guided by the various living traditions. Traditions reflect the definite value-orientation of a set of people whereas institutions are functional in character. Moreover, modernity implies modifying the existing traditions and creating room for new and better ones. In this regard, mere change is not modernity, rather, modernity can be understood in terms of tradition, though not *vice versa*. The working of our creative imagination regarding our tradition is the true nature of modernity.

Tradition, Modernity and the Future of Civilization

Through its long history, the world has undergone many changes and transformations, it has passed through various stages of social and communal life such as traveling together, to living together in caves, to the first pastoral and agricultural settlements, then onto the tentative beginnings of urban life and finally to the stage of corporate life. Through this journey, man's physical, intellectual, emotional,

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spiritual, and aesthetic aspects of life have shown diverse manifestations. Humanity has over the ages, built traditions for security and self-preservation. These traditions have been characterized by conformity, obedience based on a hierarchical value structure in the family, kinship and occupational relationships. Religion has played an important role in shaping the human mind, its attitude, and the behaviour of men. Life in the family was largely based on the principle of paternalism with man being the provider and the woman being the nurse and the nourished. This model provided security to children and led to an ordered society.

As people started questioning the established norms, especially in the west, the old traditions began to break up and modern ideation developed. Therefore, modernity came to be defined on the basis of individual freedom, freedom of thought and the right to live with dignity. Many of us take the tradition-modernity dichotomy as two distinctively contrary positions that are always mutually exclusive. But from the traditional angle, modernity and tradition have only a system relative meaning. Ordinarily, what is modern is taken as more advanced than before. In this sense, the modern has an advantage if it does not carry any more evolutionary meaning than, pre-modern the advantage being modernists finding kinship with tradition. In the western sense, modernity stands for a set of meanings derived from scientific attitudes and habits of mind. Therefore, modernity is considered as a departure from tradition. But this is a false premise. Sri Aurobindo does not admit any conflict between tradition and modernity because what is modern, is rooted in tradition.

The *Vedic* thinkers believe that Indian tradition is the embodiment of the *Sanatan Dharma* or the timeless moral and spiritual ideals enshrined in the *Vedas.* Indian culture is the expression of these ideas. So there cannot be anything called 'modern' in the historical sense from this point of view. For instance, the Indian society even today, owes its great inheritance to the great traditions of *Mahabharat* and the *Purānas.*

The values derived from the *Mahabharat* tradition are so well ingrained and pervasive that something that is not a part of the *Mahabharat* cannot be a part of *Bharat.* In this sense, what is modern,

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is at the same time, traditional.

Tradition and modernity are important factors of human existence and development in terms of both material and non-material aspects. The few human relics left through the ages have helped archaeologists and anthropologists to rewrite, as far as possible, the story of mankind, but no less important is that aspect of human development that implies a continuous search for its own potential. Undoubtedly, man is largely dependent on his environment. But man is also a repository of extraordinary energy and creativity. Human imagination has immense capacity for creativity and it is this quality that goads man to question, to invent and to modernize.

Man's awareness of the external world is not deemed to be incoherent, disconnected and aimless, but is selective, systematic and purposeful. Man is an expressive social animal and expresses himself both in verbal as well as non-verbal form. The realizations of human potential as well as a proper identification of such potentiality are intimately connected with the efficacy of communication. And the human imagination and communication ought to play a very important role in using tradition or becoming modern in our lives. As we know that man is the architect of his own culture and tradition, he is also the maker and breaker of tradition. However, it is only values that distinguish progress from mere change. These values enable humanity in selecting some and rejecting other, of his own customs, both individually and collectively. Tradition helps man in this selective behaviour. The human civilization is realized only through the understanding of tradition. Therefore, the realization of human potential is determined by the surrounding environment and civilization in which he lives. It also helps an individual to be what he is in relation to others. He undoubtedly grows largely in and through his social environments. As a saying goes, each new being is received into a style of life based on tradition and held together by tradition, and at the same time disintegrated because of the very nature of the tradition. As we know that man is a creater, a preserver as well as a destroyer.

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Moreover, man is not only a being, but he becomes and evolves. Without the past reservoir of experience, his leap forward would merely reflect his desire to progress materially, technologically and socially. His innate desire to develop further, to make new experiments or to kindle his self through imagination would remain unfulfilled. This is because man can learn, and that is his great strength not only because he looks forward, but also grows on and beyond his past. This continuous dialectic in human life on the one hand makes him rooted to tradition which can loosely be defined as collective memory transmitted through the ages, but on the other hand, he craves for progress. Thus, the so-called conflict between tradition and modernity is only apparent.

People often misunderstand the very meaning of 'tradition'. Tradition is closely related to a particular group of people. Just as there cannot be a 'common culture' or a 'common language' for all, similarly, there can be no 'common tradition' in the strict sense of the term. Culture is something lived in by a specific set of people even though separated by certain accidental conditions, e.g., ecological, ethnical differences, etc. In the same way, tradition is something only a specific set of people live by, ensuring a familiar and common life pattern.

In one sense, tradition should mean all that we inherit from the past. All the elements of social life should be regarded as traditional except, those few ideas and actions, which are absolutely new and creative, which men of each generation give shape to and point a new direction to social progress yet only a few of our inheritances are regarded as traditions. Another important aspect of human life is regulation. Most of the regulations in our behaviour are largely guided by tradition. Thus, tradition provides a common platform for different groups of individuals so that they may significantly regulate their activities in an orderly manner. Another fact is that, a tradition is not a mere observed fact like an existing custom, not a story that loses its significance in being told. It is an idea which expresses a value judgement. A certain way of action is regarded as right, a certain order or arrangement is held desirable. The maintenance of the tradition is the assertion of this judgement. Thus, tradition thrives the activities

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and creative aspects of human beings. That is why an artist is undeniably dependent on his tradition. Since the artist creates a world of communication where value judgements and emotive responses are so necessary, he finds in our traditions the essential clues to the existing value-orientation.'

Historically speaking, the tradition of food, customs and mannerisms often attain symbolic significance to a group of people. The food habits amongst most Indians are regarded as providing spiritual strength and purity (*sattivic* value.) Nationalism develops largely around a common tradition. In other words, our entire social life is guided by the various living traditions and institutions. In general terms an institution can be regarded as an organized system of behaviour and patently instrumental in character. Furthermore, the institutions of a civilized society can be broadly classified into familial, religious, governmental, economic and educational groups. To meet the needs of the people, behavioural practices are organized into institutions. For instance, one need is that children, be reared in a certain manner, and hence, we have the institution of family. Therefore, it is tradition that gives stability and an essential traditionality to many institutions. Traditions reflect the definite value-orientation of a set of people whereas institutions are functional in character. Thus, traditions are more closely bound with persons and their likes and dislikes.

Modernity is modifying the existing traditions and creating room for new and better traditions. Modernity is certainly not a cancellation of everything old, but it is a continuous process. Therefore, the so-called conflict between tradition and modernity is only a myth. It can be said that modernity is the realization of a future in terms of noble aspects of the past. In this regard, mere change is not modernity. Therefore, modernity can be understood in terms of tradition, though not vice versa. And a discontinuous change cannot be imagined. There must be continuity and over-lapping of the new and the old. The working of our creative imagination on our traditions is the true nature of modernity.

Rapid technical advancement often presents such a situation and for quick readjustment. That is why it is very natural to identify

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modernity with technical achievements. If civilization is taken as material prosperity, then the progress of civilization can be reckoned in terms of technical progress. But there still exist some human islands with men living in primitive and tribal societies for whom modernity is an empty concept. Since the material structure of such a tribal society hardly changes, there is no progress of civilization and hence no scope for modernity.

The future of civilization depends on proper education for each individual in society. This will bring socio-economic, technological and other developments and through education people can learn the importance of human values. If human beings are given proper education, they will realize and appreciate their position in society and at the same time ponder on the larger and deeper issues of purpose of life.

In all developed countries, education has developed in relation to the changing factors in society; their growing economy, political institutions, etc. In other words, there is no universal system of education, which can be adopted everywhere irrespective of the actual social reality. The idea of 'true education' was preached and practised by Rabindranath Tagore. But now in our society, privatized and commercialized education is proving to be an obstacle for true education, specially for the poor people. And this may well be a problem for the future of civilization. Richard Shaull revealed the dichotomy in educational ideology and tried to prove that there is no such thing as a natural educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes a means for 'the practice of freedom' by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation and betterment of the world.

The logic of a certain style of development impelled the developed countries of the west to introduce a process of education that was in conformity with their system of production. Though these countries embraced the idea of 'liberal economy', but in essence the 'socio-economic need' was used as a benchmark for education, unlike

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India, where a specific system of education was introduced not to serve our own need but the need of the British rulers for administrative advantages. Gandhiji's political acumen and keen historical perspective of India's situation is reflected in his idea of education that is, 'free and compulsory up to certain ages'. Gandhiji's genius made it possible for him to offer a philosophy of education in India as well as a universal perspective for the future of human civilization. We can achieve true education only through initiating a series of praxis to change our immediate environment. Thus meaningful education alone can be the true vehicle for future development.

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BOOK REVIEW

D.P. Chattopadhyaya, *Environment, Evolution and Values.* New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 2007, pp xxviii + 332, Rs. 600

Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya is well known for his voluminous interdisciplinary publications on the history of philosophy, philosophy of science, anthropology and historiography, phenomenology, religion, and so on, besides being the General Editor of PHISPC. His writings always give the readers an impulse to pause and to reflect on one's own. The book under discussion is rich and intense all along, a product of diligence and ability.

The range of Professor Chattopadhyaya's theorizing is extraordinary. He deals with most of the themes developed on environment, evolution and values, including epistemological questions raised by Kant, Hegel, Marx and others. In addition, he has sought to achieve a thorough synthesis of developments in social science and philosophy—including analytical philosophy, the philosophy of science, linguistics, political science and systems theory. It is not easy to assess the work of a scholar whose professional competence extends from the logic of science to the sociology of knowledge, by way of Marx, Hegel and the more recondite sources of the European metaphysical traditions. At an age when most of his colleagues have painfully established control over one sphere of their field or another, Professor Chattopadhyaya has made himself master of the whole, in depth and breadth alike. There is no corner-cutting, no facile evasion of difficulties or enunciation of conclusions unsupported by research: whether he is reassessing Popper, evolving and evaluating consciousness,

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delving into the modernity of Kant and Hegel, or bringing Marxist sociology up to date, there is always the same uncanny mastery of the sources, accompanied by an enviable talent for clarifying intricate logical puzzles. He seems to have been born with a faculty for digesting the toughest kind of material and then refashioning it into orderly wholes.

The subject matter of the book has been well chosen. There has been a long standing need for a whole book on these issues. In my attempt to present a discussion on the book, I would like to present some clarifications, annotations and summations, which may be useful for the limited end of preliminary acquaintance with dialectics, human rights and morality.

The most striking and impressive feature of Professor Chattopadhyaya's approach to the range and complexities of human inquiry is the way in which he weaves whatever he analyzes into a coherent *whole*. There is a *unity* of vision that informs his work. To this extent he is greatly under the influence of Marx, the young Hegelians, Schelling, Fichte and Kant from the western tradition and Sri Aurobindo, Gandhi and others from the Indian tradition. The book develops the basic concepts of evolution of natural environment highlighted by Lamarck (1744–1829), heredity and natural selection emphasized by Darwin (1809–1882) and the genetic mutation first developed by Mendel (1822–1884). Though these three great life scientists brought to light three main components of biological evolution, these were worked upon and further developed by others for a long time. Professor Chattopadhyaya argues that nature is ordinarily believed to be a world of facts governed by law of *causality* and *values* are said to be rooted in human *freedom*. The author has paid special attention to fact/value dualism with particular reference to changing theories of evolution. The book has been divided into four parts besides the Preface and the Introductions to the first and the second editions. The first part deals with human evolution. It consists of such issues as philosophical anthropology, anthropological rationalism, Sri Aurobindo's concept of Man, an evolutionary view of man, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin on human evolution, man and environment

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relations, man-society interactions and dynamics of values. In the second part the issues tackled are dialectics of ecology and epistemology, philosophical history of science, and science, philosophy and dialectics. In the third part, the author has dealt with *Satyāgraha* and social change, sociology, ideology and Indian peasantry. And in part four, the issues discussed are human rights, justice, and social context, law, morality and polity.

On dialectics, the author has developed both the subjective and the objective spheres (pp. 106–107). Dialectics occupies one of the central methods adopted by Professor Chattopadhyaya in formulating the relationship between man, ecology, society, culture and cognition. He has given a brilliant exposition of Kantian transcendental dialectic, Hegel's dialectics of the spirit, the subjective-objective dialectics of Marx and Engels. Though Professor Chattopadhyaya has so painstakingly collected, arranged and presented dialectics, he has, however, missed Popper's critique of dialectic.[1] This article also comprises one of the major aspects of Popper's thesis in his *Conjectures and Refutations* (1968). (Professor Chattopadhyaya was a student of Popper). What Popper caricatures and dismisses in this article is Hegel's so called absolute idealism and his dialectics. With the same premises and with the same line of arguments, Popper tries to dismiss Marxian dialectics too. Popper observes three features regarding Hegel's dialectics, namely, "(a) the dialectic opposition of Kant's anti-rationalism, and consequently, the re-establishment of rationalism supported by a reinforced dogmatism, (b) the incorporation of dialectics into logic on the ground of ambiguity of expressions like, laws of thought and so on, and (c) the application of dialectics to the whole world based on Hegel's panlogism and his philosophy of identity."[2] It is here that Popper expresses his personal opinion about Hegel's philosophy, "I think, it represents the worst of all those absurd and incredible philosophic theories."[3] Apart from all these charges, Popper further criticizes Hegel's dialectic in terms like "it is vague, elastic enough, it can interpret all sorts of developments and even quite contrary ones..." and thus it is "in an exaggerated and dangerously misleading form. Popper levels almost similar charges with hardly

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any terminological difference against Marxian dialectic also. What is different in Popper's treatment of Marx's dialectic from that of Hegel is best brought out in his own words, "It is only the combination of dialectic and materialism that appears to me to be even worse than dialectical idealism".[4] These are some of the issues that I wish Professor Chattopadhyaya had critically examined. However he does take into account Popper's rejection of Kant's contention that "human mind can comprehend nature because it is endowed with the *categorical competence* to create it..." (p.102). Such an allocation of emphasis may well help us to understand and appreciate the distinctiveness of the thought in question, but it is also likely to distract us from Popper's critique of the dialectics of Hegel and Marx. If this problem is resolved successfully either in the second edition of the present volume or in a future work of the same kind, posterity will certainly profit from that.

Professor Chattopadhyaya, in the context of dynamics of values, goes into the details of the *static structuralism* and *dialectical dynamism* with reference to the nature of values—moral, legal and political (p. 237). He does not take into account the status of values with reference to the *Upanishads* where alone for the first time from historical perspective, we come across an attempt to raise, discuss and resolve ethical problems pertaining to aim and ends of human life; i.e., *Purusārthas.* The solution that the *Upanishads* provide is based on the eternal truths of *Ātmanic* experience and revelation. Of these, at least two are specially noteworthy *abhyudaya* (achievements) and *nihshreyas* (attainment). In the context of moral values, the author discusses universal and eternal values as those of Kant but shifts the emphasis when he says, "Values answer human needs and are context-sensitive" (p. 138). Man stands in a dialectical relation to values, he is simultaneously a producer and a consumer of values, a creator and creature of values (p. 238). In the context of human rights, the author points out the shortcomings of the universalist theories of values with reference to human rights (p. 238). Morals and conceptions of good are said to be relative to cultures, even large cultural identities have now disintegrated into smaller ones—i.e., multiculturalism. Moral theories still oscillate

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between utilitarianism in so far as public policy, decisions of the emerging democracies are concerned, and Kantianism, in so far as individual moral life and principles are concerned. Both of these alternatives, however appealing, are now seen to be of limited application. More attractive today are Aristotelian *Ethics* expanded to include many present-day virtues, and, a communitarian ethics, which goes back to a sort of Hegelian *Sitlichkeit* as the basis of one's moral conceptions. As Professor Chattopadhyaya points out, "the common association of Kant's name with liberalism and that of Hegel with *statism...*" needs to be re-examined (p. 241). The author is also aware of the extremes of positivism and transcendentalism in social thought with reference to law, morality and polity (p. 240).

By and large, the book has been well thought out and is of immense value for teachers, researchers and the general readers. The production of the book in terms of the printing, paper, jacket design, etc., is good. There are many quotations with incomplete references on pages 20, 21, 40, 41, 42, and so on. This could easily have been edited.

Notes and References

1. "What Is Dialectic?" *Mind*, 1940, Vol. XILX. p.415.
2. *Ibid.* p.420.
3. *Ibid.* p. 422.
4. *Ibid.* p. 422.

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Pranab Kumar Sen in association with Prabal Kumar Sen, Srilekha Datta, Amita Chatterjee and Rupa Bandyopadhyay, (Eds.) *Philosophical Concepts Relevant to Sciences in Indian, Tradition:* New Delhi, PHISPC, 2006, pp 827, Rs. 2650

This thick volume is so rich in material that it took me six months to go through all the learned articles by highly distinguished scholars of philosophy and Sanskrit. As indicated by the title, the entire work is an elucidation of various concepts of Indian philosophy, in some way related to logic and philosophy of science. Therefore, it is but natural that various philosophers of logic and language are involved in this work. The book is divided into two sections, the first being concerned with what the editors have called "foundational and metascientific" concepts and the second with "concepts relevant to formal sciences". Obviously, the editors have planned the volume in such a way as to show the relevance of ancient Indian philosophical and linguistic concepts and their relationship with modern logic, metaphysics, philosophy and science. The (first) editor of the volume, Professor Pranab Kumar Sen, unfortunately passed away before the completion of the volume and the unfinished task has been brought to a successful conclusion by the general editor of PHISPC, Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya, with the cooperation of the associate editors. The volume is fittingly dedicated to the memory of late Professor Pranab Kumar Sen, whom I also had the privilege of knowing as a friend. On the whole, the range of the work is impressive and it is

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difficult and even improper to pick up any one or few of the contributors for praise or criticism. It may be said that most of the articles show high expertise and are quite noteworthy for their sharp criticism.

I

The first section dealing with philosophical concepts relevant to science consists of 21 learned articles on a variety of themes such as the concepts of philosophers, *ṛta, satya, sattva* and *tatthya,* as they occur in ancient Indian thought. There is an exhaustive analysis of ṛta as it occurs in Vedic thought, followed by an equally acute analysis of the concept of *satya* as it occurs in the Vedas and the Upanishads. Of course, the word *satya* occurs in so many of the philosophical texts that it is not possible to pinpoint any one of them as correctly explaining its meaning. The same applies to the concept of *satva* and *tathya.* The authors have taken up only the Vedas and some Upanishadic texts for illustration. This chapter is followed by one on 'Padārthas' by J.N. Mohanty. Students of Indian philosophy find this concept very peculiar to Vaiśeṣika philosophy but the author brings in other systems e.g., Madhyamka Buddhism, Vedanta, (particularly of Śankara, Mīmāmsā etc.,) to show the significance of the various *padārthas* like *dravya, guṇa* etc. The next article is on definition—*lakṣana.* We are all acquainted with the Aristotelian concept of definition, but in this work, the author of the article shows its relevance to ancient Indian philosophy. This is followed by articles on relation (*sambandha*), a very exhaustive article on *satta* (by the late Sibajiban Bhattacharya) on universals (jati), on objectivity, on causality and *kārya-kārraṇa bhāva*). These conceptions are very clearly written and although there is nothing new in what the authors have written, they are readable and refresh our memory on very familiar concepts of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thought. Chapter 11 is again a closely argued essay on the concept of '*adṛṣṭa*' as it occurs in some systems of Indian philosophy. In chapter 10 we have accounts of philosophical concepts relevant to cosmology, like the concept of creation (*śṛṣṭi*)

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and dissolution (*pralaya*), where there are extensive references to Vedāntic and Nyāya Vaiśeṣika thought, but there is no reference at all to Puranas, in which creation and dissolution (*sarga* and *pratisarga*) are the basic concepts. From the logical, metaphysical and epistemological concepts, on which the articles are quite instructive and from which there is much to learn, we pass on to the problems of life and death in the article on *jñāna, prāṇa* and *aprāṇa*. Although this is a learned article of genuine scholarship, there is very little in it regarding the contemporary relevance of these concepts as they occur in modern psychology, medicine, physiology and biology. The authors have discussed many of the above concepts quite thoroughly and with references to their original sources.

The same is true also of the articles on epistemology and logic of perception and inference, (chapters 13 to 20). Here the articles concern the nature of prāṇa and consciousness, theories of truth and error, nature of Brahman, doubt (*saṁśaya*), nature of perception and of vyāpti. The last of these is dealt with comparatively also with reference to scepticism in Buddhist metaphysics and orthodox systems. It is a topic familiar to all, but the Buddhist and Jaina views should have been considered in some greater detail. The refutation of scepticism of the Carvaka (with reference in particular to Jayarāśi's views), is taken up, quite properly in some detail. But chapter 20 on vyāpti also takes up the Buddhist and Jaina views regarding inference which is dealt with exhaustively.

II

The second section of this exhaustive and important work mainly devoted to Indian logic, epistemology and philosophy of mathematics, comes to grips with the problems as indicated by the title of the volume. The introductory chapter of this section deals with the problems related to formal sources, i.e., logic, scientific method and philosophy of science.

The late Sibajiban Bhattacharya's epitomizing the main features of the navya-nyāya is one of the most original chapters in this valuable

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book. Many Indian logicians have ignored the navya-nyāya system and this chapter certainly provides the incentive for work on this neglected system. Those who read this chapter would certainly take up a more detailed study of the navya-nyāya logic. The author makes a reference to many modern logicians in the West like Max Black, I.M. Bochenski, R. Carnap and others. It is possible that the navya-nyāya anticipates many of the modern views on formal logic, though one cannot be too certain about this. Chapter 24 ably epitomizes the various Indian views on anumāna or inference, but the learned author's views are restricted by references only to Sanskrit sources and there is no reference at all to contemporary relevance of the Indian concepts. There is very little or perhaps, no reference even to older Western systems of logic. This chapter is otherwise quite instructive and worth a careful perusal. The above criticism can also be directed against chapter 27 by the same writer (D. Prahlada Char) on pakṣatā and also against Chapter 28 by Hemanta Kumar Tarkatīrtha on hetvābhāsa. Both these articles are authoritative and are results of a careful reading of the various texts on logic in the nyāya and other schools of ancient Indian logic. Chapter 29 deals with hetvābhāsa in systems other then nyāya. The problem of error is indeed an important part of Indian logic.

Chapter 30-32 deal with Indian philosophies of mathematics. More research into ancient Indian systems of mathematics is essential in order to be acquainted with our own heritage, but this has been ignored in academic circles, although there has been much talk on the so called Vedic mathematics. The Samkhya theory of numbers is very well developed in articles 32 and more is required to be done in this field, although chapter 30 by Jonathan Ganeri is a very well-researched account of Indian philosophy of mathematics.

We pass on from philosophy of mathematics to that of grammar (Chapter 32–51, i.e., till the end of the volume). Sanskrit grammar by common international consent is one of the most systematic and the philosophy of grammar and of language in general, in ancient Sanskrit texts certainly deserve greater attention than they have received so far in this country. This part of the volume has been most enlightening to me as a reader. Chapters on systematization of

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Sanskrit grammar, on classification of terms, on pada and vākya, on some features of navya-nyāya scientific theory, on apohavāda, on vakyārthavicāra and rules for interpretation of Vedic texts deserve special mention for being highly scholarly and authoritative contributions.

The volume covers almost all basic concepts of Indian logic, ontology, epistemology, language and grammar. Many problems that are dealt with have been authoritatively handled by specialists and the students as well as the teachers and laymen in pursuit of higher philosophical knowledge will find this volume most useful. Problems of Buddhist logic however have been very sparsely dealt with; these problems perhaps find their place due to them in the volume on Buddhism.

I regard this volume as a highly significant contribution towards the revival of interest in Indian logic, epistemology, philosophy of science and mathematics and philosophy of language and grammar. It is of course true that only one or two authors have highlighted the contemporary relevance of ancient Indian contributions in the fields mentioned above. But each author has carefully and laboriously worked on the problems allotted to him.

One article on Buddhist and Jaina views on vyāpti and the last article entitled, '*Nitārtha* and *Neyārtha* Texts with reference to Buddhist Semantic theory' are exceptions. There are only a few other references to Buddhist logic. However, we may wait for a comprehensive volume to be published on Buddhism in the PHISPC-CONSSAVY series.

The author of each article in this work is a reputed authority in his field and the result is that the contributions are quite rich in variety and content and should be rewarding for the reader. Generally speaking, reading works on logic and philosophies of mathematics are not interesting and require great amounts of patience. It is creditable that many authors in this book have articulated their ideas through understandable language, including some highly complex theories, that are not ordinarily open to the laymen. In this volume, even the layman can easily follow the complex doctrines, theories and philosophies, authored by some famous and learned authorities in

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the various fields mentioned above. I note with sorrow that a few of these authors have passed away before seeing their contributions in print.

The Project of the History of Indian Science, Philosophy and Culture does not generally publish text books to be prescribed for the post-graduate students. But this volume can easily serve as a major work of reference for the advanced student of Indian philosophy, who will definitely profit by the highly valuable information provided by it.

The late Professor Pranab Kumar Sen and his associates and Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya, the general editor have done a singular service to the cause of Indian logic, Indian philosophy of language and grammar by publishing this volume. They deserve our congratulations.

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G.C. Nayak, *Nirvāṇa in Candrakīrti's Prasannapadā:* A Study in the *Mādhyamika* Concept of *Nirvāṇa* in the context of Indian Thought, Shimla, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2006, pp 107, Rs. 200

The monograph under review is a focused study of a single concept. *Nirvāṇa*, as interpreted and argued for by Candrakīrti in his commentary, *Prasannapadā*, on Nagarjuna's philosophical classic, *Mūla Mādhyama Kārikā*. Professor Nayak is well-known for his sustatined studies on Candrakīrti, and the present monograph is an example of his devoted endeavour, deserving compliment for the lucidity of his exposition as also for his ingenious and comparative understanding of the relevant concepts across Indian and Western philosophies. It has been a delight to read the book. There is a mellow fruitfulness about it.

The book runs into five chapters, excluding the concluding one. Nayak opens with a consideration of the two cocepts of *mokṣa* and *nirvāṇa*. There is a singularity with which all the schools of thought in India come to a decision in interpreting the Upanisadic inheritance of the polar ideas of *Saṁsāra* and *Nirvāṇa*. Buddhism too from its earliest times, has mused and meditated accordingly. And it is no wonder that Candrakīrti also, following his mentor Nāgārjuna, would do so. Nayak interprets, both *mokṣa* and *Nirvāṇa*, as 'freedom'.

Obviously this is freedom to be followed by the preposition *from*, and Nayak quotes Majjitima Nikāya to show that the Buddha persistently refused commitment to any dogmatic view. And Nayak

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contends that *Mādhyamika* position is no *vāda* or theory. It is directed against any possible conceptualization or categorical assertion, and in consonance with a position such as this, it can resort only to *reductio ad absurdum* or *prasanga* in dealing with any *vāda* whatsoever. The section six of the first chapter is devoted to explicating the statements of *Prasaunapadā*, and it is done by distinguishing Candrakīrti's views from similar news of Vedantic contexts, in terms of conceptual nuances and presuppositions. Yet Nayak finds considerable affinity between Sanikara and Candrakīrti in their reformulation of respective concepts. What Sainkara does with *adhyāsa* which confuses the idea of the self with the idea of the object, and that of the object with the idea of self, Candrakīrti does the same manoeuvre with *svabhāva*. Nayak draws his reader's attention to the ethical aspect of freedom in a remarkable manner, and he deplores the fact that the goodness of the free man in the context of Indian thought has not been highlighted enough. It could not be a matter of sheer indifference or even callousness, or a state of alienation from the suffering of human beings around. Nayak's invocation of the Bodhisattva ideal is very apposite. The Buddhist moral paradigm of the perfect man entails the vow to alleviate the suffering of others. In this regard the asymmetry between the ideals of the *jivanamukta* and the *bodhisattva* is well juxtaposed. Altruism, in the context of Mahāyāna, is not only a *means* but also a part of the enlightenment programme.

Nayak argues for the view that *nirvāṇa* is *kalpanakṣaya*, or giving up of essentialist thought construction. This forms the kernel of the second chapter. The *anātmā* thesis implies the rejection of the view of self as *skandhas* plus. *Anātmā* is an open doctrine, and schools of Buddhism have offered varied interpretations of the thesis. Nayak takes note of such interpretations, ancient and modern. If nothing exists by itself, then whatever is said to exist should be a matter dependently co-ordinated. Such a line of argumentation would leave the concepts of both *ātmā* and *anātmā* referentially hollow, if not opaque. Hence to steer the middle course would be to go without committing oneself metaphysically in either direction of eternalism and nihilism. Mādhyamika is not a *dṛṣti*, rather it stands for *sarva-dṛṣti-*

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prahāna. Śūnya is a technical shorthand for *pratītyasamutpāda.* The way of understanding experience in the light of dependence of one concept, *hetupratyaya* on another, the older dispensation took it in the sense of the causal law according to which the evanescent momentary things appear. Nayak sympathises with the Mahāyāna view, *a la* Candrakiriti, that *pratitya samutpāda* is not simply a temporal sequence of the entities between which there is a causal relation. What it stands for is conceptual interdependence in the matter of understanding concepts: *parasparāpekṣā* of concepts is what is designated as *śunya* or *nihsvabhatā.* No concept has an independent or permanent essence of its own. Thus a good deal of metaphysical load is shedded, and Nayak looks upon it as a philosophical activity, a matter of critical insight into the nature and function of concepts. This is the way to *nirvāṇa,* or freedom from all sorts of thought-constructions or *kalpanā.* Candrakīrti defines *nirvāṇa* as the total annihilation of *kalpanās* or essentialist thought-constructions: *sarva kelpanā kṣyarūpa.* As Nayak puts it: *prajñā* consists of freedom from the captivity or bondage of essentialist picture thinking, and this itself is *nirvāṇā.*

In the third chapter, Nayak proposes to juxtapose *kalpanā* and *śunyatā.* Essences are core properties or clusters of properties present in all those things which bear such names as *knowledge, language, beauty, meaning, humanity, life, law* and *justice.* Each is a single, invariant reality, present in the most varied instances or in a separate realm of forms. These are some of the ways in which essentialism has characterized philosophic traditions, be it of the East or the West. Essentialism has pervaded western thought no less than the Indian tradition, paradigmatically speaking, Nyāya culminates into Advaita absolutism.

Taking *svabhāva* to stand for 'essence', we may propose *svabhavavāda* to do the job for essentialism. Now Candrakirti's critique of *svabhāvavāda* rejects the view that there exists the uniquely unchangeable nature of an object belonging essentially and intrinsically to itself. For Candrakīrti, it is logically difficult to endorse the view that there are immutably fixed and independent metaphysical essences, intrinsic and unique to objects, independent

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of *hetu* and *pratyaya*. To endorse such a view of existence would be to render *nirvāṇa* an impossibility, for *klesas* and *skandhas* would be there unchangingly. The causes of bondage would not cease. Appealing to the principle of the dependently coordinated existence of elements, Candrakīrti, reformulates the concept of *nirvāṇa*. The true nature of things is in their arising on account of *hetu* and *pratyaya*, since nothing abides immutably, it is equivalent to senselessness, and hence *nirvāṇa*.

The truth or *tattva* lies neither in *svabhāva* nor *prapañca*. This is *prajñā*, and it consists of the knowledge of the things or the case as it obtains. The zone between *svabhāva* and *prapañca* is that of silence. Nayak contends Stcherbatsky's suggestion that *tuṣnibhāva* that Candrakirti recommends in the face of contending metaphysical theories is the silence that one may resort to in encountering the Absolute. The concept of an Absolute has no room in Candrakīriti's context, Nayak relates the point of view to the idea that outside the logical space of factual discourse, there is a supervoid which is not even a matrix of possibilities. This is what justifies silence on the part of the enlightened person. Ordinary discourse is *śunya* in the sense of *niḥsvabhāva*, and therefore, it would be a philosophical stupidity to venture positing a world of reality over and above the world of ordinary discourse.

Nayak engages himself in delineating the history of the concept of *nirvāṇa* in course of the development of Buddhist thought. This is interesting in itself. But more interestingly he, towards the end of the chapter argues against Potter, and corrects him by pointing out that it was not Candrakīrit's concern to dismiss the distinction between construction and error, and also between these two and veridical knowledge. Potter misses the point about *samvṛti satya*. As Nayak has said that one comprehends the conventional to be conventional or *samvṛti satya*, and one does no longer cling to it as having a fixed nature of its own, that is the end to it. Language has only a conventional use. *Prajñā* is a critique of language, the therapeutic imagery is significant in this context. We are not to forget that *śūnyatā* is meant to cure us of dogmatic views. But if it is taken as a view amongst many, it would be another incurable malady. To

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quote Nayak, "*nirvāṇa* as *sarvakalpanākṣaya*, the cessation of all metaphysical essentialist thought-constructions, suggests to us a unique philosophical therapy to be adopted, if we want to get rid of the persistent illness in the form of *avidyā* or ignorance in respect of fixed and immutable essences of things and ideas" (p. 62).

What then are implications of the concept of *nirvāṇa*? This is what Nayak concerns himself with in chapter five. *Śunyatā* in the sense of essencelessness implies altruism, or more specifically, *anukampā*, a synonym for *karuṇa* perhaps. The implication is hard to get at, for is it analytic to say that enlightenment entails compassion, even though in Mahāyana texts, *karuṇā* and *prajñā* go hand in hand. There are arguments for the case, and quite strong ones for the conjunctive assertions as well. Yet the paradox remains, for at the higher reaches of philosophical achievement, logic appears to lag behind. That is the lure and charm of the position.

Nayak has done well in considering the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* in this context, the other-centricity of Mahāyāna ethics finds an eloquent expression in this text. The *reasons* given for *parātmasamatā* are taken to entail the *imperative* of altruism. Is it logically cogent? How can theory and praxis be rendered complementary?

There is one iconological lapse in Nayak's taking the Chinese *abolokistesvara*, Kuan-yin as masculine. Kuan-yin is a female bodhisattva, much like *Tārā* in the Tibetan pantheon.

The conclusion calls for a special word of compliment. In the previous chapters Nayak has discussed the philosophy of human freedom presented by Candrakīrti as he looked back to Nāgārjuna's concept of *śunyatā* based on the latter's interpretation of *pratītyasamutpāda* and had formulated it in terms of a critique of essentialism or *sarvakalpanākṣaya*, which he identifies with *nirvāṇa*. Nayak now puts the entire perspective in a comparative mode, aligning western thinkers in the focus. He has done well in bringing to our notice that essentialism has been quite pervasive in the West. Nayak mentions, among others, the modal logicians. Saul Kripke and Hillary Putnam to bring home the point that essentialism has been a dominant feature of the western thought, despite Wittgenstein. One may even suspect that there was a sort of replacement of

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referentialism of the *Tractatus* by conceptural essentialism of the *Investigations*. Of course Nayak could not wholly agree with this suspicion. He is more in sympathy with the critique of essentialism by the later Wittgenstein. Whatever it may be, the fact remains that Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti between themselves have given a thorough non-essentialist account of human thought and experience. Nayak has admirably succeeded in showing this.

Nayak has also been successful in arguing that for Candrakīrti, when there is a complete cessation of essentialist thought-construction, *nirvāṇa* is not far-off. This itself is *nirvāṇa*. *Prajñā* consists of a critical insight into the exact nature of concepts as they really are. Soteriologically, the philosophical enterprise is the highest good, *Śiva*. It is significant also that cessation of thought-constructions entails silence or mental quiescence, the prolific linguistic habits have to come to an end. In Buddhism there is no disengagement of the moral from the intellectual.

Nayak can be said to have achieved what he intended to do. The monograph provides enough occasion for disagreement. But that is another story. What matters is Nayak's confident argumentative style, learned but not pedantic, and this is not an easy matter. I am happy for having had the privilege of reading the work of one of my senior contemporaries, which is so engaging and so edifying a tract.

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Madhav Ashish, *An Open Window: Dream as Everyman's Guide to the Spirit.* New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2007, pp 134, Rs. 200

This book is a product of fifty years of spiritual discipline in which guidance from dreams played a crucial role, this is what the author says:

Sri Madhav Ashish, the author of this very interesting book is a disciple of Yogi Sri Krishna Prem, an English Professor who became a Vaishnava Monk. Madhav Ashish was born in Edinburgh he came to India during the Second World War. For many years he was the head of Mirtola Ashram in Kumaon hills. In this book he has made an exhaustive analysis of different dimensions of dream-work. He is inspired by Freud and Jung's ideas of dream as an illumination of individual and collective unconscious but he recognizes the fact that despite Jung the prognostic and metaphysical dreams still have no place in the contemporary worldview which excludes all non-physical aspects of being. Perhaps that is the reason why many spiritual schools have refused to have any contact with this kind of psychology.

The author supports the ancient view of dream as a window into the inner worlds. He has tried to synthesize into this view the tools of modern psychology that analyse dreams in terms of unconscious determinants. He looks upon the realm of dream as the realm of magic, myth and mystery. He states that "it is a fluid realm whose stability lies only in the observer, never in the images observed. It is a flexible realm that adapts itself to the needs of the dreamer. It is ambiguous, its messages yielding different meanings to different interpreters and all capable of being true. By ordinary social standards

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it is amoral, yet when one passes deeper, one finds the very roots of true morality.

For Madhav Ashish our self, soul or Atman is the power that shapes the symbols of dreams. He regards dream as an open window into the inner kingdom of the soul. However, he does not deny the role of dreams in unveiling repressed sexuality and the collective unconscious. For him the rejection of the idea of soul is similar to a blind man's inability to understand visual perception. According to him meditation is the means by which we can learn to identify the self and distinguish it from the ego. Dreams provide us a guidance from our higher being but it is possible only if we are able to bring the mind to rest. Dreams also help us in seeing the connections between the factors that disturb the mind and their sources. He clearly states that "The Self's power to give guidance through dreams is of profound significance, for it implies that the Self already knows the goal to which life is directed, and it is in this sense that the true guru is said to reside within the heart (p. 13). However, he also concedes that one is constantly facing problems while dealing with this subject. He contends that "if the fact is accepted without demanding explanation, one's acceptance is honoured by events".

Madhav Ashish formulates seven principles for the interpretation of dreams. The first involves a search of that aspect of oneself that is being represented by the content of the dream. The second principle highlights the fact that our higher being urges us to growth, maturity and wholeness. The third principle underlines the necessity of facing self-criticism. The fourth principle, states the necessity of preparing oneself to face the lowest and dirtiest regions of oneself. The fifth principle refers to the need of recognition that the power of dreams is not merely the energy of repressed psychic material. The sixth principle asserts the guidance of dreams by a higher intelligence than our ordinary waking state. The seventh principle states the universality of the experience of dreams.

The author highlights the necessity of recording the dreams. He holds that we forget dreams because of our reluctance to accept criticism. To avoid this forgetfulness, we need to note the dream experience soon after having it.

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Conditions suitable for dream interpretation vary between individuals. A person accustomed to introspection and self criticism is most facilitated to understand the messages of dreams. However, all people at some stage need others for interpreting their dreams. The interpreter of dream should try an interpretation and then see if it is acceptable to the dreamer. He holds that the symbols of dream are "the universal language of the soul". But there are also references in dreams to the private experience of the dreamers. The difficulty in understanding dreams lies in the fact there are several levels of dream symbols. The interpretation of a dream has to be in accordance with the level of the dream. The author states that he has not covered the dreams of people who have no other aims in life other than personal ambitions or attaining a stable well-adjusted personality because he has focussed on the dreams of people on the inner path. However, since human problems are universal there are certain common features that are shared by all the dreamers. For instance traumas, anxieties and fear of death play an important role in dream-work. Apart from these mundane dreams the author also states out of body, reincarnation and death dreams.

The author has made it clear that his objective of writing this book is not to write a handbook on dream analysis but to draw attention to the much neglected spiritual aspect of dreams. They can provide guidance to a spiritual aspirant provided he pays attention to them and is open to learn from their symbolic messages.

The book is well written and would be useful for both spiritual aspirants as well as psychologists who are more open in their attitude towards the self.

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REPORT

National seminar on "Śakti Cult and Tāntricism", Guwahati, 22–24 June, 2007

A national seminar on the theme "Śakti Cult and Tāntricism" was organised at Guwahati from 22 to 24 June 2007, by PHISPC. It was inaugurated by Professor Bhuvan Chandel, Project Co-ordinator of PHISPC. In her speech, Professor Chandel spoke on the objectives of the Project and its achievements. She also dwelt on the importance of theme of the seminar. Professor G.C. Nayak, who presided over the inaugural session, spoke on the genesis of Śakti worship and the *Tantras* in India and explained the significant role that they have played in the religious life of the people down the ages.

Fifteen diverse and thought-provoking papers were presented and discussed during the seminar. Three papers were presented in the first academic session. In his paper, "Emergence of Śakti Worship in Assam", Professor Sibnath Sarma gave insights into the worship of Devī in Assam since the 5th century AD. He also spoke about the philosophical and spiritual significance of the worship of Goddess Kāmākhya. Professor G.C. Nayak presented a paper entitled, "The Philosophy of Saptaśatī Candī" in which he explained the philosophical basis of the cult of Mother Goddess. She is addressed as Śakti who is manifested everywhere ("*Yā devī sarvabhuteṣu śakti rūpena saṁsthitā*...). He maintains that the philosophy of the tantras is "commonistic philosophy" inasmuch as the tāntric faith can be professed by the common people, irrespective of their social status and gender. He also explained the philosophical significance of Saptaśatī Candī.

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Dr. (Mrs) Krishna Barua presented a paper entitled "Śrī Yantra: Symbol of Cosmic Consciousness". She dwelt at length on the significance of Śrī Yantra and the importance of the yantras in the *tāntric sādhanā.*

In the second academic session, two papers were presented and discussed. In his paper "Worship of Śakti in Assam—with reference to sage Vaśisṭha", Dr. Binod Sharma gave an account of the Vedic sage Vaśisṭha who came to Kāmrūpa to worship Goddess Kāmākhyā. He referred to the local legends and purāṇic sources for this account. He maintained that Assam was the seat of the Śaktī cult since ancient times. Another paper presented in the second session was that of Dr. (Mrs.) Anjana Chaliha. The title of her paper is "Buddhist Tāntrism—its foundation, growth, nature and impact".

The paper presented in the third academic session was that of Dr. (Mrs.) Sujata Purkayastha on the topic "A Study of Some Śākta Practices—with special reference to *Kulārṇava Tantra*". She gave a detailed account of the different modes of *tāntric sādhanā* mentioned in the tāntric texts with special reference to *Kulārṇava Tantra,* which is one of the most important *tantras.*

Professor Navjivan Rastogi and Professor Raghunath Ghosh presented their erudite papers in the fourth academic session. The title of Professor Rastogi's paper was "The Concept of Śakti in Kashmir Śaivism". He argued that in the Indian philosophical tradition, one comes across two kinds of approaches. One approach regards Śakti as a category of being. The other either subsumes Śakti under one of its accepted categories or rejects it altogether. For the tantras in general, and Kashmir Śaivism, in particular, Śakti is the seminal category which not only accounts for both the differentiation in the world and integration, but also for the total range of experiences—cognitive, affective, volitional and spiritual. The absolute divinity, Parameśwara Śiva, is both transcendent and immanent. Kashmir Śaivism introduces the concept of Śakti-Śaktimān in order to represent the inextricable relation between Śiva and Śakti, the agent and the agency. Śakti or power is the agency of creativity. Śakti as Pratibhā is the source of Creativity and of beatitude (*ānanda*) in the entire cosmos as well as in the world of artistic creations.

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In his paper entitled "The Concept of Mother Goddess in Indian Tradition", Professor Raghunath Ghosh traced the origin of the concept of Mother Goddess, and also gave the philosophical implications behind the concept. He referred to the concepts of *puruṣa* and *prakṛtī*, the male and the female principles of the cosmos in the Sāṁkhya philosophy. He also discussed the concept of *Ardhanāriśvara* in Śaiva darśana, and maintainsed that the one ultimate being involves two aspects—male and female. The concept of mother goddess has emerged as the cosmic principle which is the source of all creation. Śakti is called mother—the source of all beings. She is given various names, and is worshipped in two particular forms—as the loving mother and as the angry and fearsome mother.

In the fifth and the sixth academic sessions, three papes were presented and discussed. Dr. (Mrs.) Archana Barua's paper "Some Glimpses of Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā" gave a general account of the rites and rituals followed in the worship of goddess Kāmākhyā whose temple is situated in the Nilachal hills of Guwahati. She explained the significance of *ambubāchi melā* (held in the month of June). The sanctum sanctorum of the temple is revered by the Hindus as the *yoni piṭha* of goddess *Parvatī*.

Dr. M. Kirti Singh, in his paper "The Concept of Saktism and Tāntrism in Manipuri Thought", studied the elements of Śakti cult and Tāntrism in the traditional Manipuri world-view and religio-cultural practices. He also described the various forms in which mother goddess is worshipped.

Professor Rajendranath Sharma's paper "Śakti Worship in Assam—with special reference to Kālikā Purāṇa and Yoginī Tantra" gave a detailed account of the rituals of Devī worship based upon these two very important and authoritative texts of Śakti cult as practised in eastern India.

In the seventh academic session, four papers were presented and discussed. Shri Raj Kumar Jhalajit Singh's paper "Shakti Worship in Manipur" gave a historical account of the development of the worship of mother goddess in general and Śakti worship, in particular, in the state of Manipur. He made interesting references to the worship of goddess Pānthoibī, the Manipuri counterpart of goddess Durgā, in

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the 17th century AD, as described in the literary works of the 17th–18th centuries. He has also given an account of the distinctive modes and ritualistic practices followed by the Manipuris in the worship of goddess Durgā.

Professor Sanat Kumar Sen's paper "Reflections on *Tantra* Philosophy" explained the philosophical foundation of the *tantras* and the underlying ideas and spiritual significances of *Tantra sādhanā*. He said that the problem of the relationship between energy or power and the possessor of power has been the moot question in Indian philosophical systems. *Tantra* does not regard the world as illusory. It does not divest ultimate reality of power. For it, Śiva (Brahman) and Śakti (power of energy) are one. They are inseparable. Śakti is taken to be female, and Śiva as male. But the ultimate divine reality is both female and male. From the angle of devotion and worship, it can be said that it is easier for Śakti devotees to consider the deity as the loving mother, and themselves as her devoted and dependent children. *Tantra* does not propagate *sanyāsa*. i.e., a life of renunciation for spiritual practice. A householder can very well be a *tāntrik guru*, if he has the necessary qualification and self-control. Happiness can be obtained in all areas of life, provided there is self-mastery. *Tantra* does not advocate shunning or rejection of the objects of enjoyment; but it advises enjoyment in freedom and with caution.

Professor Nilima Sharma's paper "The Philosophic Significance of Śakti Cult in North-east India" gave an account of the development of the cult of Śakti in the north-eastern India, in general, and Assam in particular. Professor S. Shyamkishore Singh also presented a paper on "*Tantra* as *Sādhanā* for Spiritual Realization". Professor Bhuvan Chandel presided over this last academic session.

The seminar concluded with the enlightening observations of Professor G.C. Nayak and Professor Bhuvan Chandel.

The director of the seminar tendered a vote of thanks.

S. SHYAMKISHORE SINGH
Director

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